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The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision Spring 2017 Full Issue

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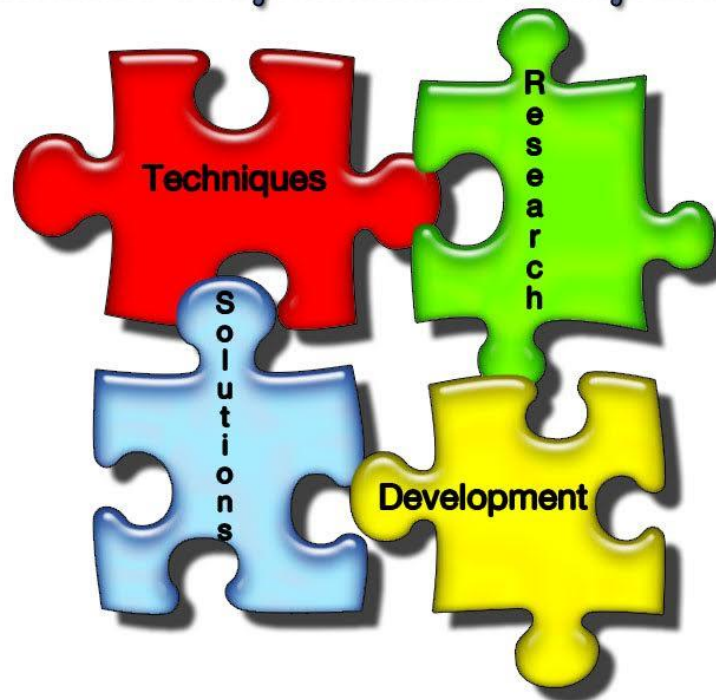
The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision Spring 2017 Full Issue

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(.rtf). We do not accept Macintosh or WordPerfect formats. Submissions to the journal should be sent to: <http://repository.wcsu.edu/jcps/>

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The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision

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Volume 9

Number 1

Editorial Notes

Edina Renfro-Michel

Articles

Social Class Bias: A Phenomenological Study

Jennifer M. Cook

Novice School Counselors' Experience in Classroom Management

Deborah K. Buchanan , Blair Sumner Mynatt , Marianne Woodside

Expert Clinical Supervisors' Descriptions of Easy and Challenging Supervisees

Gulsah Kemer , DiAnne L.Borders

Gatekeeping Practices of Counselor Educators in Master's Level Counseling Programs

Vanessa B. Teixeira

A Survey of Students' Knowledge about Child Sexual Abuse and Perceived Readiness to Provide Counseling Services

Jennifer Marie Foster

A Pedagogical Framework for Counselor Educators working with Millennial Students

Rebecca L. Koltz ,Adina Smith , Dawn S. Tarabochia , Cristen C. Wathen

Teaching Online Group Counseling Skills in an On-Campus Group Counseling Course

Kelly Anne Kozłowski , Courtney M. Holmes

Recruiting Undergraduate Students: Creating a Path to the Counseling Profession

Jake J. Protivnak , Jennifer F. Yensel

Personal Counseling in Academic Programs with Counselor Trainees

Meredith Drew, Mark D. Stauffer, William Barkley

Editorial Note



Edina Renfro-Michel, Editor

This issue of JCPS begins the 9th volume of the journal. The articles in this issue will be of interest to counselors, supervisors and counselor educators.

Cook conducted a phenomenological study that focused on licensed practicing counselors' experiences of classism and their social class bias. The interviews revealed fascinating information that will inform the practice of counselors and counselor education. Buchanan, Mynatt and Woodside investigated novice school counselors' classroom management experiences and found three overall themes that impacted these experiences to inform the training and practice of school counselors.

Supervisors might want to focus on Kemer and Borders' research that utilized descriptions of easy and challenging supervisees from expert supervisors to identify categories relating to these descriptions. This will be of high interest to supervisors due to the objective nature of these categories, and the specific results yielded.

This issue has several topics of specific interest to counselor education. Drew, Stauffer and Barkley investigated the impact on counselor trainees who participate in personal counseling during their Master's program. Teixeira researched CACREP and non-CACREP counseling programs to discover possible differences in gatekeeping practices that can inform counselor education programs. Specific to counselor educators, Koltz, Smith, Tarabochia and Wathen used Gowin's pedagogical theory to conceptualize the current available research on millennial students, and to give counselor educators information on educating this population. Protivnak and Yensel provided counselor educators and counseling programs with specific methods to recruit undergraduate students into Master's in Counseling programs. Foster researched counseling and counseling psychology students' own perceptions on how prepared they were to counsel clients with a history of childhood sexual abuse. Counselor educators will be interested in the specific areas in which students did and did not believe they were ready to work with this population. Kozlowski and Holmes provide an in-depth group counseling course example that was developed specifically to train students in a traditional group counseling course to utilize online group counseling technologies and methods.

I want to thank NARACES for their continued support of the journal, the Board's commitment to JCPS makes my job much easier. Thank you to our editorial board, our reviewers have done a wonderful job of reviewing manuscripts and helping authors improve their work. My Graduate Assistant, Massiel Rosario has been very supportive of the journal, and spent many hours editing each manuscript and the journal as a whole, and working to keep me on track. Thank you, Massie, I couldn't have completed this issue without you!

Social Class Bias: A Phenomenological Study

Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision, Volume 9, Number 1, Spring 2017

Jennifer M. Cook

Nine licensed professional counselors participated in semi-structured interviews about social class and socioeconomic status, including their experiences with classism. Phenomenological analysis revealed both participant classism experiences and use of language that expressed social class bias. Implications and recommendations for future research for counselor educators and supervisors are provided.

Keywords: Social class, SES, classism, microaggressions

Counseling professionals and scholars have acknowledged the disparity between those in the dominant, privileged ranks and those at the margins, and have focused on discrimination perpetrated by the those of the dominant culture with particular attention to how these dynamics have occurred in counseling (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). Although there has been a response to cultural disparities between those with privileged and oppressed statuses (Sue et al., 1992), it was not until the early 2000's that social class received any serious attention from researchers (e.g., Fouad & Brown, 2000; Liu, 2001). To date, the majority of social class and counseling literature has been theoretical in nature, and few researchers have examined counselors' social class awareness, knowledge, and skills. Further, few authors have discussed how counselors can examine their biases related to social class, or how social class bias might manifest in the therapeutic relationship (Vontress, 2011). What the sparse literature does reveal is social class significantly impacts clients' worldviews, including how they perceive themselves, and that middle class privilege pervades US culture (Liu, Pickett, & Ivey, 2007).

Terms Defined

Defining socioeconomic status (SES), social class, social class designations, privilege, classism, and social class bias is germane to understanding the purpose of this study and for providing a framework for how social class and SES bias may intentionally and unintentionally manifest. *Socioeconomic status* is determined and defined objectively by one's income, education, and occupation (Santiago, Kaltman, & Miranda, 2013). *Social class* is a multidimensional, subjective concept that includes SES, as well as beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviors based on experiences within one's social class group affiliation(s) (Kraus, Piff, Mendoza-Denton, Rheinschmidt, & Keltner, 2012; Smith, 2006; Smith, Li, Dykema, Hamlet, & Shellman, 2013).

In capitalist countries like the US, social class group designations are linked to social stratification, which is the hierarchical, layered structure determined by how valued resources are distributed within the structure (Beeghley, 2000). *Social class designations* then, cluster individuals based on their accumulation of and access to valued resources, and can encompass the multidimensional layers listed in the above definition for social class. Many schemas exist (e.g., Thompson & Hickey, 2005; Warner, Meeker, & Eells, 1960), and there are benefits and limitations to each. In this article, the social class designations used, low social class (LSC), middle social class (MSC), and high social class (HSC), are a modified schema based on the categorizations established by Warner, Meeker, and Eells (1960) and are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1

Social Class Designations

Overarching Term Used in Article	Class Designations Included in Each Overarching Term (adapted from Warner et al., 1960)
Low Social Class (LSC)	Poverty, “Nonworking poverty,” Lower-Lower, Low, Upper-Lower, Working
Middle Social Class (MSC)	Lower-Middle, Middle, Upper Middle
High Social Class (HSC)	Lower-Upper, Upper, Upper-Upper

Privilege is an unearned benefit based on qualities determined to be valued by the dominant culture. People who are male, White, heterosexual, able-bodied (Johnson, 2006), Christian, and/or middle class (Liu et al., 2007) are privileged in US culture. To determine who holds privilege with regard to social class, social class groups are ranked according to SES factors. SES factors and social class groups are influenced significantly by social stratification and cultural narratives about which social class values, beliefs, and behaviors are most desirable, which leads to which group holds privilege culturally. In the US, people who are MSC are considered the privileged group based on these factors. Privilege and the power associated with privilege, are foundational to all forms of oppression and discrimination, including class-related bias, oppression, discrimination, and classism.

Classism is bias, discrimination, prejudice, or oppression toward a person or group based on social class or SES (Smith, 2005). Liu (2011) identified four forms of classism: *downward*, *upward*, *lateral*, and *internalized*. The concept most relevant to this investigation is that of downward classism. Downward classism occurs when people in higher social class groups (i.e., MSC or HSC) discriminate against (explicitly or implicitly) or marginalize people whom they perceive are in LSC (Liu, 2011). Such behaviors are the most common and obvious form of

classism (Brown, Riepe, & Coffey, 2005). Brown et al. (2005) stated, “classism results from the unequal and unearned privilege of those who have the power to discriminate” (p. 79). Such classism occurs frequently when people in a higher social class group prefer a *higher* social class group’s resources, values, or worldviews over the resources, values, or worldviews over those of a lower social class group. Particular emphasis is placed here on *higher* social class group’s preferences rather than that of lower social class groups because in US society, individuals who are MSC and higher have the power and the privilege to discriminate against individuals who are in LSC.

Downward classist behaviors often take the form of microaggressions, that is, everyday, brief interactions that intentionally or unintentionally degrade, insult, or diminish the humanity, customs, or values of people in non-dominant groups (Sue, 2010). These interactions can manifest as behaviors, verbalizations, or environmental factors (Sue, 2010). Class-denying statements or behaviors (e.g., class does not matter, The US is a “classless” society) (Johnson, 2006) are examples of social class-based microaggressions. Other social class microaggressions can serve to make people who are in poverty invisible (e.g., relocation of people who are homeless to another town) (Lott, 2002), and can include belief systems that place blame on people in LSC (e.g., people are poor because they do not work hard enough). Social class microaggressions can be rooted in *social class bias* as well as classism. Biases can be outside of persons’ awareness, yet can convey messages that diminish non-dominant groups’ (i.e., LSC groups) experiences, worldviews, and values (Sue, 2010). *Social class bias* is distinguished from *classism* in this article to point to the unawareness that can surround social class and result in social class microaggressions.

Literature Review

To date, few authors have explored counselors' attitudes and beliefs about social class, counselors' social class bias, and the potential negative ramifications for clients from LSC. To date, the vast majority of literature related to classism is either theoretical or examines college students' experiences with classism (e.g., Ostrove, Stewart, and Curtin, 2011; Thompson, Her, & Nitzarim, 2014). The studies presented represent the current literature with regard to this phenomenon.

Smith, Mao, Perkins, and Ampuero (2011) investigated whether clients' social class presentation influenced counselors' therapeutic impressions, and whether counselors' just-world beliefs impacted their opinions about their clients. Participants ($N = 193$) were clinical and counseling psychology graduate students, 82% of whom reported being from MSC or higher. Using four written case vignettes, each representing a client in HSC, MSC, working class, or poverty, participants assessed the clients in multiple ways, including the Belief in a Just World Scale (BJW) (Dalbert, 1999). Researchers found when participants had high BJW scores, which indicated strong belief that the world is just (i.e., people get what they deserve), they believed clients who were working class or living in poverty were lower functioning, had more mental health symptoms, had unfavorable clinical outcomes, and believed there was a higher probability of "less meaningful" (Smith et al., 2011, p. 22) work with these populations.

Smith et al. (2013) conducted a qualitative study to investigate the lived experiences of psychotherapists who worked with people in poverty. Researchers completed one-hour interviews with 10 participants, 9 of whom reported being from MSC or higher. Twelve domains were identified. They found some participants, prior to working with people in poverty, avoided and/or held stereotypes about people from LSC. Common stereotypes participants reported were

people who are poor are “dirty, lazy, or violent” (Smith et al., 2013, p.141), and poverty causes mental illness. Even after participants were invested in their work with people in poverty, some participants continued to have difficulty distinguishing clients’ psychological symptoms from symptoms related to how poverty might be affecting clients. Further, some participants held biases such as the belief that people in poverty cannot hold a job, cannot meet their basic needs, have mental health issues, and do not have the ability to make good decisions.

Clients who identified a social class difference between themselves and their counselors have perceived such negative beliefs about people in low social class, and they reported negative impacts on the counseling relationship. Balmforth (2009) conducted a qualitative study to understand how social class difference between client and counselor impact the counseling relationship from the client’s perspective. Of the seven client participants, six identified as working class and perceived their counselor to be middle class. Balmforth found that participants felt misunderstood by their counselor, they regarded the counselor as an authority figure, and perceived the counselor had both a lack of awareness about social class and negative responses toward them. This led clients to feel discomfort and feelings of inferiority, and that they could not be themselves, thereby impacting the counseling relationship negatively (Balmforth, 2009).

Toporek and Pope-Davis (2005) sought to understand how counselors reduced their biases and became more multiculturally competent. They surveyed 158 graduate students from 10 US counseling master’s programs. Using forced-entry hierarchical regression analyses, they found the more multicultural training students had, and the more sensitive their racial attitudes, the more likely they were to explain poverty in terms of structural inequality; the students who had less sensitive racial attitudes were more likely to explain poverty in terms of how individuals caused or contributed to their poverty.

The literature reviewed demonstrates that social class and SES bias and classism can manifest in multiple ways (Smith et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2011), and that counselor belief systems about social class can contain inherent biases, many of which the counselor may be unaware and can impact the counseling relationship negatively (Balmforth, 2009). Multicultural training can have a positive impact on counselors, yet many do not receive significant training about social class and SES (Toporek & Pope-Davis, 2005), which may be due to a dearth of research in counselor education about counselors' understanding and awareness about social class (Cook & Lawson, 2016). The purpose of the study associated with the findings reported in this article was to describe counselors' social class and SES understanding and awareness. To date, one study exists on this topic (Cook & Lawson, 2016). Substantial findings emerged during the course of the study, specifically the ways in which participants described social class and SES and how they operationalized these terms (Cook & Lawson, 2016), and the findings related to classism reported in this article. Thus, the purpose of this article was two-fold: (1) to report participants' experiences of classism, and (2) to highlight participants' own social class bias that emerged in the interviews.

Method

Results were drawn from a qualitative study that explored how licensed professional counselors (LPCs) understood SES and social class (Cook & Lawson, 2016). Because of the limited research regarding counselors' understanding of these constructs, and the goal to unearth participants' lived experiences related to social class, a phenomenological, qualitative design was selected for this exploratory study (Hays & Wood, 2011). Phenomenological studies, rooted in constructivism, aim to understand both the lived experiences and the multiple realities participants have with the construct under investigation (Hays & Wood, 2011). With this design,

semi-structured interview questions allowed participants to describe how they understood an array of issues related to social class and SES. There are two categories reported: *Participant Classism Experiences* and *Participant Language that Expressed Social Class Bias*. Three themes emerged related to participant language that expressed social class bias: *Social Class Microaggressions*, *Misconceptions about Social Class*, and *Social Class Privilege*.

Participants and Location

Participants were identified via purposeful sampling in order to meet the following inclusion criteria: (a) current, practicing counselors in a clinical mental health or private practice setting in one designated state in the southern US, (b) LPC in the designated state, and (c) graduate counselor training program completed no more than 10 years prior to participation. Participants were excluded if they earned their counseling master's degree from either of the two universities with which the researcher had a relationship. LPCs were recruited to ensure clinical experience, and having completed graduate training no more than 10 years prior increased the likelihood that participants would have received multicultural training during their graduate programs.

Participants were recruited using the state LPC database in addition to the state's professional counseling association member database and various public, Internet information sources (e.g., private practice websites and "find a therapist" websites). The researcher contacted participants via email or telephone and asked screening questions to ensure they met recruitment criteria.

Criterion sampling was employed for this study. Nine counselors participated in this study, which is within the acceptable range of 5-25 participants for phenomenological studies (Hays & Wood, 2011). Participants' ages ranged from 32 to 59 years old ($M = 42.4$ years), three

identified as African American/Black and six identified as White, and all participants self-identified as female and as currently part of the MSC spectrum. Participants' counseling master's programs were completed between 2004 and 2009, and eight graduated from programs accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (CACREP). Participants had between 5 and 11 years of clinical experience ($M = 8.1$ years). Seven participants worked in clinical mental health settings and two in private practice; three participants worked in rural environments, two in urban, two in suburban, one participant worked in both rural and urban environments, and one in a town.

Role of the Researcher

In phenomenological research, the researcher must define her position and potential biases so the study is conducted rigorously, biases are acknowledged, and research consumers can analyze findings comprehensively (Hays & Wood, 2011). I identify my membership in the dominant culture and my privilege as a White person with advanced education who has become MSC, and I recognize my non-dominant identities as a woman raised in an upper-LSC context (Warner, Meeker, & Eells, 1960). Through this lens, my LSC group membership allowed me to name perceived social class bias that occurred during the interview process. A researcher without an emic or *insider perspective* (Ponterotto, 2005) of LSC may not have been able to identify such statements as biased, because s/he might lack LSC knowledge and experience.

Data Collection

Prior to any participant contact, I obtained Institutional Review Board approval. Preceding interview commencement, participants provided written consent, were given a copy of the consent forms, and chose a pseudonym. Moreover, because of the sensitivity of this topic, although participants chose pseudonyms, no names are used in this article to provide an

additional layer of participant anonymity. Because of the social class bias findings, participants could have adverse reactions to the study's results; however, I believe participants were unaware of how their language regarding social class could be perceived as biased. Thus, the findings are not meant to dishonor or punish participants, but rather are intended as a charge to counselor educators, counselors, and supervisors to increase social class awareness, knowledge, and skills so clients might be better served.

I conducted two pilot interviews, and final interview questions were adjusted based on these interviews. Pilot interview data were not included in the data analysis for this study. In the initial phase of the interview, I talked with participants about their demographic information. Next, participants were asked questions such as, "What comes to mind when you hear the term, *social class*?" "What comes to mind when you hear the term, *socioeconomic status*?" "What strengths and limitations do you have that come from your social class group?" "Tell me how you've felt advantaged/disadvantaged because of your social class," and, "What have been your experiences with classism?" Participants were not asked explicitly what biases they held about different social class or SES groups. I audio recorded interviews for transcription, and video recorded them for review. Interviews averaged 60-90 minutes in length.

Data Analysis

As a single coder with peer reviewers, I coded the data in multiple phases. Initially, all data, including transcribed interviews, observational data recorded in field notes, and the reflexive journal, were organized and coded in three phases via Corbin and Strauss's (2008) model of open, axial, and selective coding. Coding commenced once two interviews were completed.

During the first phase, open coding, I performed a line-by-line analysis of each transcript, field notes, and the reflexive journal, and assigned *in vivo* codes (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Codes were labeled and color-coded to differentiate codes. In the second phase, axial coding, I used the *in vivo* codes identified during open coding to form categories. During selective coding, the final phase, I identified multiple salient categories that emerged from the data. The categories illuminated the phenomena under investigation (Creswell, 2006).

Trustworthiness

I implemented procedures to ensure trustworthiness throughout the course of this study. Multiple strategies were employed: consistent and detailed documentation, member checking, peer debriefing, and triangulation (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). I documented all research activities using a comprehensive audit trail. After I completed each interview, I recorded field notes to capture contextual variables, insights, and reflections. The field notes added depth to the interview interactions and data, and aided me in data analysis. In order to increase transcript clarity and accuracy, I invited participants to amend and add to their transcripts using a member check; six out of nine participants chose to member check their transcripts. Within one week of the interview, I emailed transcripts to participants, allowing two weeks for edits.

To further enhance confidence and reduce bias, I recruited two auditors with qualitative research experience. The auditors reviewed transcripts and ensured coding accuracy, coded two transcripts, and discussed emerging themes and research findings with me. Similarly, I utilized two peer debriefers who processed potential bias in interview proceedings and data analysis, and offered alternative insights into the data. Finally, I triangulated all reported data employing multiple data points.

Findings

Two overarching categories are presented with regard to classism: *Participant Classism Experiences* and *Participant Language that Expressed Social Class Bias*. I asked participants directly about their experiences with classism, that is, if they had ever felt disadvantaged or discriminated against as a result of their social class membership. Seven participants reported experiences related to classism. These reported experiences formed the category, *Participant Classism Experiences*. Participants experienced and responded to classism in different ways, and the tangible theme was participants' recognition that their class membership affected how they were treated. The second category, *Participant Language that Expressed Social Class Bias*, emerged from the data. Three themes surfaced: *Social Class Microaggressions*, *Misconceptions about Social Class*, and *Social Class Privilege*.

Classism Experiences

Seven participants discussed experiences with classism. They revealed they knew they were treated differently based on their social class membership and experienced a sense of social class based exclusion, yet all participants responded in different ways. One participant who identified as White, reared in a rural, working class family, talked about her first international travel experience during college. She shared, "I was traveling with kids who had been all over the world and of course they thought I was some dumb country girl and they all had to protect me, and like I didn't know how to get a cab." Further, she reflected on the experience:

That's the way they thought about it, which was sort of awkward and funny to me. I'm like, "Do you all think I'm an idiot?" It was like so funny, but it was endearing in a way too that they were like, "You're going to stay right with us."

While this participant noted classism in this incident, she interpreted the event as both “awkward” and “endearing,” indicating possible confusion connected to classism experiences.

Another participant, raised in an urban, LSC family, who identified as Black, described her experiences feeling judged by peers when she began to shop at more upscale stores after she left the inner city to attend a prestigious university. She explained why she believed her friends might have judged her choices:

. . . I like Target . . . but a lot of people like Wal-Mart and they call Target "Tar Jay." Just different things like that. Oh I don't go to Target, Target's kind of expensive. I'm thinking, “I don't know,” or Harris Teeter, Kroger . . . I'm a vegetarian. They have the kinds of foods I get organic; some things I get organic . . . I think it's geographical sometimes in that usually people from the inner city are not really exposed to Harris Teeter or Kroger or some of those other stores or World Market, or Trader Joe's; they aren't [stores] in the inner city so it's not a store that they would even think about. You know they probably drive by it and wonder, “What's in there?” Or even if they went in there sometime they'd probably see the food [and say], "Who eats that?”

The participant reported later she felt judged by her peers from her LSC neighborhood about her food choices as a vegetarian. When asked about classism experiences, she stated initially, “I can't really remember and I think because I blended in a lot. I blended in a lot, and I looked up a lot.” Yet, as she described what it is like to identify now as MSC instead of as LSC, she elaborated on social class differences and how her LSC peers' perceptions of her have changed based on her MSC status.

A participant who identified as African American, raised in a suburban, middle class family described she never knew her family of origin was MSC until she left home.

One of the reasons I never thought I was middle class is because the middle class that my father did hang with . . . had [etiquette training] programs. Jack and Jill, and several other type things, and I wasn't good enough to be part of those programs . . . My father was pushing me this way, he wanted me in those type of things. [They told him,] "She's not what we're looking for." And this was within the African American culture. I was never good enough because I was willing to play in the projects and it was okay with me. I wasn't good enough for several things, and I noticed when I got older.

This participant stated how playing in the projects signaled to people who ran elite groups that she was not what they were looking for, even though her family identified as MSC and the groups were African American. The participant interpreted this exclusion as class-based not race-based. She added that, as an adult, she does not fit in with her friends from the projects either because of class worldview differences.

Participant Language that Expressed Social Class Bias

During the phenomenological coding process, I coded my field notes and reflexive journal in addition to interview transcripts. These data formed categories and themes and were integrated with the findings from the interview data. Interview questions for this study were not crafted to unearth the findings in this category, and thus, no interview questions were included to inquire about how participants believed they participate in class bias or classism. A single category emerged, *Participant Language that Expressed Social Class Bias*, and three themes surfaced: *Social Class Microaggressions*, *Misconceptions about Social Class*, and *Social Class Privilege*. This category and subsequent themes describe how participants spoke in ways that inadvertently expressed social class bias.

Social class microaggressions. The most common social class microaggression involved the ways in which participants referred to people in LSC. All participants with the exception of one, spoke about people in LSC with *otherizing* terms such as “SES challenged,” coming from “troubled economic status families,” “special circumstances,” “poor people,” and most frequently, “them” or “those people.” Notably, the participant who did not use these terms also used person-first language the majority of the time (e.g., people who are poor).

Another way social class microaggressions arose was in the context of describing counseling clients. Three participants revealed class-denying behaviors. With regard to counseling, one participant stated:

I think you have to recognize where that person’s coming from, but your skill set should be able to actually supersede that. It shouldn’t be that this is my person that’s from the projects and I’m from this upper middle class. It should be that there’s no class in here.

Another participant shared her belief that economic issues are simply human issues:

It's that part where trying to be able to be relatable to them because I've been in a lot of the socioeconomic classes just throughout my adult life and it's being able to say, “Yeah, I can remember that time,” or, “I know how hard it is,” and I still, I may make money now but I still don't like to give it to anybody. I want to keep it for myself. I would prefer to. I don't want to give it to bills. And it's that being able to relate to them and get them to see that yeah, we are all human. That's just the human experience type of thing.

With both of these examples, participants assert class is not a salient cultural factor, and thus is not relevant in the counseling context.

Misconceptions about social class. Eight out of nine participants stated hard work leads to success. One participant stated:

People that work hard in school; that if they're not provided for, they're able to get there on their own . . . A lot of times, these kids [from LSC] don't think they can go to college, and they can. They can go to college. They just got to work hard, and they'll have to do it a different way, but they can get there.

Another participant stated, "I think with enough hard work and stick-to-itiveness you can, at least in America, you have the opportunity to be whatever you want to be." A different participant shared:

I don't suss [*sic*] it out specifically on class but some of the values of if you work really hard, you can. You can live it. You can have a very good life, a comfortable life. That opportunity is there, you have to look for it.

These quotes reveal meritocracy, a markedly middle class belief that if people work hard enough, they can achieve their economic goals (West-Olatunji & Gibson, 2012).

Three participants spoke about how class awareness can affect people's happiness. One participant stated, "It seems to me that people who are most aware of it (their class group affiliation) are the least happy because they are so focused on where they want to be versus where they are and being okay with that." Another participant stated:

I could relate better with those who had nothing and were happy. Not the whiners, who wanted to keep up with the Joneses but those who had nothing and were still happy. I can have nothing and be still happy.

These quotes illuminate that participants may have socially embedded messages related to social class such as the idea that people may be poor, but they are happy (West-Olatunji & Gibson, 2012).

Class privilege. Five participants made statements that revealed class privilege. When asked how she believed social class groups are delineated, one participant stated, “It’s just not something that it benefits me to think of. You could watch me think for much longer, but it’s just something I don’t think much about.” When asked what class group she affiliates with currently, another participant said, “. . . I had never really thought about what class I was in, but okay. I just hadn’t.” Another participant, raised in MSC, discussed an ongoing struggle she has had in her adult life with friends from her childhood who were raised in LSC: “I’ve never been on that level . . . I didn’t stand on line to get cheese . . . not that I’d want to.”

Another participant talked about the advantages of a counselor from MSC working with children and teenagers from LSC. She stated, “When you’re in therapy with them, they can see that this is not how everybody lives. There are different ways.” While discussing the strengths of working with clients from MSC, another participant stated clients from MSC have:

. . . that expectation that anything is possible. “Yeah, okay, yeah, I can do that.” If I make a recommendation, “You might want to,” “What do you think about consulting with so and so,” “Yeah, sure, sure,” expecting they will go out [and do it]. As opposed to [clients from LSC], “Well, let me think, how do I do that?”

These quotes illustrate the privilege associated with being a member of MSC: One does not have to think about one’s social class affiliation, one can be a model or example for those in LSC, and one has the knowledge and resources to enact counselor suggestions (Johnson, 2006).

Discussion and Implications for Counselor Education and Supervision

Classism was defined as bias, prejudice, oppression, or discrimination toward a person or group of people based on social class or SES, perpetrated by those who have the privilege and power to do so (Brown et al., 2005; Smith, 2005). While classism can be overt, often it takes the

form of social class bias or microaggressions: Brief interactions that intentionally or unintentionally degrade, insult, or diminish the humanity, customs, or values of people in non-dominant social class/SES groups (Sue, 2010). Classism was a salient experience for the majority of participants in this study. They reported varied experiences and reactions, yet all conveyed a sense of being treated differently and described social class-based exclusionary experiences.

Concurrently, I found participants also unknowingly spoke in ways that expressed social class bias, demonstrated by class microaggressions, misconceptions about social class/SES, and/or a privileged social class position. For example, some participants indicated those who worked hard could attain their goals. This MSC belief in meritocracy, coupled with a seeming unawareness of the systemic economic structures at work in US culture, meant participants failed to realize that many who work hard are not automatically or even eventually financially successful. Not one participant mentioned the notion of *privilege* that often tips the balance of economic success in favor of those who are born into groups with more power, privilege, and resources (Staton, Evans, & Lucey, 2012). Failure to acknowledge privilege is problematic because counselors can find themselves blaming individual clients for being from LSC and more commonly, for their life circumstances (Smith et al., 2011). A more balanced view would be to understand clients as individuals embedded in a complex societal structure. In order for counselors to take this perspective, counselor educators and supervisors must emphasize how social class functions. If counselors-in-training learn about social class and SES inequities and disparities, determine how they have social class privilege, and work through implicit biases they hold about social class, they will be better equipped to serve clients from all social class groups, especially clients from LSC (Smith et al, 2011; Balmforth, 2009).

Unlike members of other social class groups, people in LSC often have fewer choices when selecting counseling providers, and they are more likely to be blamed for their economic circumstances or made *invisible* by people in higher social class groups (Lott, 2002). Smith et al. (2011) uncovered biases counselors may hold about people from LSC such as they are lower functioning, have more mental health issues, and have less favorable clinical outcomes. Smith et al. (2013) revealed additional counselor social class biases, such as people in LSC cannot hold a job, they are unable to meet their basic needs, and they do not make good decisions. These biases are not held about people from MSC or HSC: They are held about people in LSC. Combined with the reported findings, it is reasonable to conclude there could be serious consequences for clients if counselors fail to become more culturally competent in the area of social class.

Some participants made comments suggesting social class differences were insignificant, and that the focus, rather, should be on the unifying concept of shared humanity. Denying social class difference is similar to the notion of being “colorblind” vis-à-vis racial difference (Hardy & Laszloffy, 1998). To deny aspects of clients’ culture denies clients’ worldviews, values, beliefs, and experiences, which can cause clients to feel blamed, invalidated, and wrong, all of which are the antithesis of culturally competent counseling (Balmforth, 2009; Day-Vines et al., 2007; Vontress, 2011). It is striking to note that some participants who shared personal classism experiences expressed simultaneously a desire to focus on shared humanity rather than on social class experiences, thereby potentially denying their experiences as well as their clients’ experiences. This demonstrates that class-denying beliefs can be both internalized and affect the counselor’s sense of self, as well as expressed to clients with similar affects and additionally, the potential to erode the counseling relationship (Balmforth, 2009).

Moreover, some participants used terms such as *those people*, and, *them* when referring to people from LSC, which unintentionally can result in social class-related microaggressions (Sue, 2010). When counselors choose to *otherize* clients, they distance themselves from their clients, a move that can fracture the therapeutic relationship. Clients may interpret such distance as the counselor implying something is *wrong* with them, a perception that increases the likelihood they will not return to counseling (Vontress, 2011). One participant underscored her own class privilege by referring to the luxury and *benefit* of not having to think about social class (Johnson, 2006). Counselors are in a position of power and privilege in the counseling relationship, and when counselors do not address their power and privilege, at best they may struggle to understand clients' worldviews, and at worst, they risk harming clients (Balmforth, Day-Vines et al., 2007).

All participants took at least one multicultural course in their graduate training programs, and most participants stated social class or SES was discussed in some way; however, five noted they did not remember anything specific about those discussions. These results suggest social class and SES have not been integrated consistently into counselor education and supervision, and some counselors may not have developed their social class awareness, knowledge, and skills in the same ways they have developed other areas of multicultural competence (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation), which may be due in part to counselor educators and supervisors not receiving education in this area. Toporek and Pope-Davis (2005) found that the more multicultural education and experiences counseling students had and the more sensitive their racial attitudes were, the more likely they are to explain poverty in terms of social inequality. These findings underscore the necessity of continual and thorough multicultural education so counselors-in-training can continue to reduce their biases, particularly with regard

to social class and SES. Such training positions counselors well to build the therapeutic relationship more fully with their clients without judgment. For current counselors, continuing education regarding social class and SES is critical to fill awareness, knowledge, and skill gaps in this area. In order for this to occur, counselor educators and supervisors must increase their social class and SES competence.

In order for counselors-in-training and supervisees to develop social class and SES awareness, knowledge, and skills, counselor educators and supervisors must first increase their social class and SES awareness, knowledge, and skills, and prioritize multicultural competence in this area (West-Olatunji & Gibson, 2012). The findings revealed in this article indicate that some counselors do not have adequate awareness and understanding about how their language might express social class bias as evidenced by *otherizing* language, denying the role social class plays in clients' lives, and conveying misconceptions about social class. Further, these findings demonstrate that some counselors have limited understanding about meritocracy, and how hard work may or may not lead to success. Some participants seemed reluctant, or possibly unaware, of the need to examine their class privilege. In order for counselors to gain the awareness, knowledge, and skills to overcome these biases, again, counselor educators and supervisors must raise their awareness about their own social class experiences and the social class privilege they may hold (West-Olatunji & Gibson, 2012), so they have the tools to teach students and supervisees about social class. Without this, it may prove difficult for counselor educators and supervisors to assist their students and supervisees to develop social class awareness, knowledge, and skills.

The aforementioned topics are important springboards to begin to increase counselor educators' and supervisors' social class and SES awareness and knowledge so they are able to

provide education and training experiences that include social class. Further, these areas give counselor educators and supervisors clues about where counselors-in-training and supervisees may need the most support. Counselor educators and supervisors are poised nicely to use their power and privilege to spearhead learning experiences that invite students and supervisees to grow in their social class and SES awareness, knowledge, and skills. Counseling faculty and supervisors have the opportunity and obligation to assist counselors-in-training and supervisees to examine their class privilege, debunk class misconceptions, and identify ways clients are marginalized by class microaggressions. Counselor educators and supervisors can rectify this oversight, and provide opportunities to increase trainees' social class and SES awareness, knowledge, and skills.

Limitations and Future Research

There are some limitations associated with this study. First, the sample was confined to one state in the southern US. Therefore it is important to replicate this study in other geographic areas. Second, men were not represented, nor were racial groups other than African American/Black and White. Third, this study was not about classism per se, so studies designed to understand the breadth and specificity of classism are warranted. Fourth, even though measures were taken to ensure trustworthiness, semi-structured interviews with one interviewer/coder are vulnerable to this issue, and study replication with additional researchers and coders is indicated.

Additionally, it is important to conduct future research with counselor educators and supervisors to understand their social class and SES awareness, understanding, knowledge, skills, and subsequent training on the area, as well as how they integrate social class and SES into their courses and in supervision. Further, it would be applicable to understand counselor

educators' and supervisors' experiences with social class bias and classism and how these experiences impacted them and their work with students and supervisees. Finally, specific studies about how counselors-in-training have experienced social class bias or classism during their counselor training could inform counselor educators and supervisors about particular behaviors, environments, and interactions that cause counselors-in-training to feel oppressed or discriminated against based on the social class.

Conclusion

Many people, including counselors, experience classism. However, it is paramount clients do not experience implicit or explicit social class bias or classism in the counseling relationship. Counselor educators and supervisors can assist students and supervisees in acknowledging and claiming their social class experiences, so they can examine and work through their social class biases, understand social class privilege, and dismantle language clients might perceive as reflecting social class bias. In addition, counselor educators can model ways of broaching (Day-Vines et al., 2007) social class, as well as take responsibility for providing didactic and experiential opportunities for students and supervisees to learn about social class and SES, the effects of classism, and how to empower clients from LSC groups. They can be intentional about training ethical, multiculturally competent counseling professionals to ensure clients receive the highest quality mental health services possible.

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Novice School Counselors' Experience in Classroom Management

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A school counseling core curriculum is typically delivered in a classroom setting. Therefore, school counselors need to be prepared to manage a classroom during the delivery of classroom core curriculum lessons. Phenomenological research methodology was used to understand the classroom management experiences of seven school counselors in their first year of employment. Findings indicated that participants' experiences were influenced by: a) prior knowledge and experience, b) relationships with teachers and students, c) the classroom teacher's management style, and d) the ability to plan, organize, and deliver engaging, developmentally appropriate core curriculum lessons. Implications for school counselors, and counselor educators in preparing school counselors for classroom management, and specific training techniques are discussed.

Keywords: school counseling, classroom management, guidance curriculum, school counseling core curriculum

A developmental school counseling core curriculum is a vital component of a comprehensive school counseling program's delivery system (American School Counseling Association, 2012). The school counseling core curriculum is typically delivered in a classroom setting, therefore it is analogous to classroom teaching (Bringman & Lee, 2008). The delivery of a school counseling core curriculum to students in the classroom is effective for reasons such as: a) it is the most effective and efficient way to meet the needs of a maximum number of students (Bringman & Lee, 2008; Geltner & Clark, 2005) due to the high student to low counselor ratios; b) school counseling core curriculum classroom activities improve student academic achievement and overall school success (Bringman & Campbell, 2003; Carey & Dimmitt, 2012; Lemberger, Selig, Bowers, & Rogers, 2015); and c) school counselors inform students of school-wide opportunities, distribute information and address students' developmental, academic, and career needs in an efficient manner through the school counseling core curriculum (Akos,

Cockman, & Strickland, 2007).

Studies also state that academic achievement is contingent upon effective classroom management (Cheema & Kitsantas, 2013; Fisher et al., 2015; Marzano, 2011). As a result, it is imperative that school counselors are versed in the knowledge and skills necessary for classroom teaching and effective classroom management. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), two prominent governing bodies of the school counseling profession, support school counselors' involvement in school counseling core curriculum delivery and classroom management.

The ASCA National Model School Counselor Competencies (2012) state that school counselors should be able to demonstrate classroom management and instructional skills necessary to effectively implement the school counseling core curriculum. Moreover, the CACREP Standards for school counseling programs asserts that school counselors receive the requisite training to design a core curriculum, develop lesson plans, deliver differentiated instruction, and implement classroom management strategies (CACREP, 2015). Despite the importance of classroom management in the effective delivery of school counseling core curricula, the knowledge and skills necessary for effective classroom management have not been thoroughly examined in school counseling research.

To answer the research question for this study, "What are novice school counselors' experiences in classroom management while teaching classroom guidance lessons?" the researchers chose a phenomenological research methodology for its ability to richly and deeply portray participants' experiences free from interpretation and researcher bias (Merriam, 2009). Through the description of novice school counselors' lived experiences in classroom

management, counselor educators are able to gain an understanding of school counselors training needs, and thus tailor learning activities to better prepare school counseling students to successfully manage a classroom during the delivery of school counseling core curricula instruction.

It is worth noting here that the term *guidance curriculum/lesson* is used interchangeably with the term *school counseling core curriculum/lesson* throughout this manuscript. This reflects the current trend established by the ASCA (2012) to replace the term *guidance curriculum* with *school counseling core curriculum* since the inception of this research study.

Literature Review

Classroom management can be defined as all the strategies teachers use to establish and maintain an effective learning environment including: managing behavior, arranging the physical environment, and establishing and maintaining classroom procedures (Brophy, 1986; Goodwin, 2012; Jones, Jones, & Vermette, 2013). A well-managed classroom limits distractions, provides structure, creates a positive environment, and supports students' learning. As more states align their school counseling programs with the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) National Model school counselors are spending more time in the classroom than in previous years. Under the ASCA National Model school counselors may spend up to 45% of their time in classrooms delivering core curriculum lessons, depending on the school level in which they work (ASCA, 2012). Despite the fact that teaching school counseling core curriculum lessons is a fundamental component of the profession (ASCA, 2012; Bringman & Lee, 2008; CACREP, 2015; Geltner, Cunningham, & Caldwell, 2011; Peterson, Goodman, Keller, & McCauley, 2004; Quarto, 2007) a thorough review of the literature revealed a dearth of research on school counselors' experiences in classroom management

School Counseling Research Related to Classroom Management

School counseling research related to classroom management has primarily focused on the differences in perceived experiences between school counselors with- and without prior teaching experience (Bringman & Lee, 2008; Peterson et al., 2004). These studies highlighted the challenges participating school counselors faced in managing the classroom while performing classroom guidance lessons. Those school counselors with prior teaching experience indicated a greater degree of comfort in managing the classroom (Peterson et al., 2004), and reported higher levels of competence in conducting classroom guidance lessons than their non-teaching peers (Bringman & Lee, 2008). Conversely, participants with no prior teaching experience reported lower levels of competence in conducting classroom guidance lessons, and increased challenges in developing classroom skills (Bringman & Lee, 2008; Peterson et al., 2004). Some participants without prior teaching experience reported becoming increasingly more comfortable in the classroom with time. Others reported a lack of classroom skills and found it challenging to “figure out classroom management” (Peterson et al., 2004, p. 250). These studies did not explicate the characteristics of ‘competent delivery’ of a classroom guidance lesson, nor were specific details of what was challenging about classroom management addressed. One can surmise classroom management would be an aspect of competence in the delivery of school counseling core curriculum lessons, and a set of requisite classroom management skills would be necessary for competence to ensue.

Quarto’s (2007) investigation of school counselors’ experiences in managing student behavior during large group guidance shed some light on the specific classroom management strategies school counselors employed to manage off-task (e.g. out-of-seat, focusing on something other than the lesson) and/or disruptive behavior (e.g. talking out-of-turn, annoying a

classmate) during the delivery of classroom guidance lessons. Despite the fact that two-thirds of the participants had received no training in classroom management during their training programs they were employing verbal and non-verbal techniques such as making the voice louder or softer to draw attention, using direct and indirect verbal comments, using direct eye contact, proxemics, and silence as means for managing off-task/disruptive behavior. The participants who had received prior training reported learning these techniques through observing teachers and school counselors in the classroom, assigned readings, and classroom discussion (Quarto, 2007).

What Counselor Educators Say

Recent research in the school counseling literature underscores counselor educators attempt to identify the specific classroom management knowledge and skills in which school counselors need to be trained. Geltner, Cunningham, and Caldwell, (2011) identified 40 knowledge (13 items) and skills (27 items) components necessary for effective classroom management. Most of the knowledge items were related to group counseling while the 27 skill components focused specifically on classroom management behaviors. Behaviors such as rule setting, nonverbal communication, using wait times, reinforcing, processing, and facilitating cooperative learning activities were among the skills identified as necessary for effective classroom management (Geltner et al., 2011).

Geltner et al's (2011) research is indicative of the strides counselor educators are making to understand the classroom management training needs of school counselors. To address these training needs counselor educators are beginning to employ some strategies to better prepare their non-teaching experienced students for the rigors of classroom management. Some of these strategies include developing specific courses to orientate non-teaching

experienced school counseling students to classroom management. Courses such as Bundy and Studer's (2011) School Orientation for Counselors course provides direct instruction in classroom management and includes classroom observations, interviews, and reflective journaling (Bundy & Studer, 2011). Peterson and Deuschle's (2006) model for school-counseling interns with no prior teaching experience includes reflective observations of school culture and interviewing school administrators, teachers, and other school staff. While counselor educators are making progress in addressing the classroom management training needs of school counselors, research that ascertains the occurrence and effectiveness of these measures is still lacking.

Teacher Education Literature Related to Classroom Management

Due to the paucity of research on classroom management in the school counseling literature, the authors turned to the teacher education literature for further research on the topic. Research over the past several decades has consistently shown that classroom management is the one aspect of the teaching profession in which teachers feel the most ill-equipped (Duck, 2007; Freiberg, 2002; Goodwin, 2012; Meister & Melnick, 2003; Stoughton, 2007). Despite their training in research-based best practice pedagogy, new teachers often shy away from cooperative- and projected based- learning activities in favor of lectures and textbook instruction in fear of losing control of the classroom whereas their experienced counterparts tend to exert less control over classroom activities and student behavior (Ritter & Hancock, 2004; Unal & Unal, 2009; Van Hover & Yeager, 2004). Additionally, research on new teacher attrition revealed that classroom- and behavior management are cited as the most common reasons new teachers leave the profession (Harrell, Leavell, van Tassel, & McKee, 2004; Meister & Melnick, 2003; Mitchell & Arnold, 2004). Since classroom management is challenging for new teachers

one can surmise it is equally as challenging, if not more so, for school counselors with no pedagogical training on best practices in classroom management.

The Essential Classroom Management Skills School Counselors Need to Possess

The curricular nature of school counseling core curriculum classroom activities closely approximates classroom teaching, and requires planning and delivery skills akin to those required of teachers (Akos, Cockman, & Strickland, 2007; Geltner et al., 2011). School counselors need to be proficient in (a) designing curriculum, (b) developing lesson plans, (c) structuring the physical classroom, (d) establishing classroom rules, schedules, and procedures; (e) managing transitions, and (f) maintaining student motivation (CACREP, 2015; Hennington & Doggett, 2004). Strategies such as using proxemics, differentiated instruction, cooperative learning techniques, and wait times are also important skills for school counselors to utilize (Akos, Cockman & Strickman, 2007; Evertson & Neal, 2006; Geltner, 2011).

For the purposes of this study the authors conducted a thorough review of the literature to determine what school counselors experience in terms of classroom management while conducting core curriculum classroom lessons. Classroom management appears to be an area of school counselor competency that has been ill-defined. It has received little attention in school counselor training programs, and proves to be the greatest challenge for school counselors entering the profession. The latter is congruent with the teacher education literature. In order to better prepare school counselors for the rigors of classroom management it is essential that counselor educators understand what school counselors actually experience in the field.

Method

Phenomenological research is a qualitative research method that examines a phenomena, or experience through the subjective eyes of the participants by listening to their different stories

(Willis, 2007). The goal of phenomenological research is to *describe*, rather than *explain* the participants' lived experience (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997; Willis, 2007). The iterative process of repeated immersion in the text of participants' first-person interviews enables two or more researchers to identify the salient themes that illuminate the participants' experience; and draw out the *essences*, or deeper meaning of the phenomena under study (Merriam, 2009). This process allows the researchers and potential readers to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena.

Participants

The participants in this study were licensed school counselors who recently graduated from a 48-hour CACREP accredited school counseling program, and who had been working in a school setting for less than one year. Participants were identified and recruited by contacting the school counseling program director at a university in the southeastern United States. A total of 12 school counselors were initially contacted, and seven agreed to participate in the study. Participants included four elementary school counselors, two high school counselors, and one middle school counselor. One elementary school counselor had previous teaching experience. All participants were female, between the ages of 24 to 35, and identified as Caucasian.

Procedures

The researchers became interested in exploring novice school counselors' experiences in classroom management because of their involvement supervising school counselors-in-training. Two of the researchers have previous experience as school counselors and classroom teachers. The third author has over 20 years of experiences as a counselor educator. All three researchers are privy to the challenges of managing a classroom through their own experiences, and observations of school counselors-in-training.

Before the authors began this study the lead author, and primary investigator, participated in a *bracketing interview* led by the second author/co-investigator. The *bracketing interview* provides the interviewer with a sense of what it is like to be interviewed on the topic of investigation (Pollio et al., 1997), and aids in the identification of salient themes and meanings held by the lead investigator on the subject (Merriam, 2009). Thereby “sensitizing [her/him] to any potential demands [she/he] may impose on their co-participants either during the interview or in its subsequent interpretation (Pollio et al. 1997, p.48).” The *bracketing interview* and subsequent discussion helped the researchers understand their preconceived ideas about classroom management. Trustworthiness of the data included using multiple researchers involved in a negotiated analysis, the continual discussion of researchers’ own experiences, and member-checking (Glesne, 2006). The interviewer kept a reflective journal throughout the data collection and analysis process writing before and after each interview and reflecting on her own subjectivity (Glesne, 2006; Merriam, 2009; Pollio et al., 1997).

Data Collection

Once the Human Subjects Research Board approved the study, the lead investigator made initial contact with the participants. The nature of the study was explained, and a copy of the approved Institutional Review Board application and an informed consent form was sent via email. At the time of the interview a professional disclosure statement was discussed, and informed consent and permission to tape were obtained prior to beginning each interview. Each interview lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes and began with the question “Tell me about your experience with classroom guidance, specifically classroom management.” Open-ended questions and prompts such as “Tell me more” or “Can you elaborate?” helped participants’ expand on the description of their experience. The interviewer took care to allow the participants

sufficient time to think before responding, and any incongruences were clarified immediately following a contradictory statement (Glesne, 2006). The audiotaped interviews were then transcribed by an independent transcriptionist who removed all identifying information. Upon receipt of the transcribed interview data, the lead researcher assigned pseudonyms to ensure anonymity, and increase meaning and readability of the reported data.

Method of Analysis

The data was analyzed through a multi-step process. First, each researcher independently extracted *meaning units*, in the form of words or phrases from the transcribed interviews that conveyed a significant aspect of the participant's experience (Thomas & Pollio, 2002). A new *meaning unit* began when the participant changed theme or topic during the conversation (Wertz, 2005). Second, the researchers independently reviewed the meaning units and assigned relevant themes. Third, researchers worked together to develop a negotiated set of themes. Fourth, the researchers used the new set of themes and reviewed meaning units again while looking for examples of current themes and identifying deviant cases. This independent review and group negotiation took place in four face-to-face meetings and multiple email communications, and continued until the researchers came to a consensus of themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data. The researchers then developed the meaning of classroom management for each participant, discussed the multiple meanings, integrated the themes, and suggested an essence of the experience for these participants. The researchers then documented their findings and sent them to the participants to member-check for accuracy of interpretation. All participants reported that the researchers' interpretations were an accurate reflection of their experiences. Lastly, the researchers used thick, rich description to illustrate each of the themes in documenting their findings.

Results

Three major themes emerged from the interview data. Theme titles were selected from participants' actual words in an effort to keep the reporting of the findings grounded in the participants' experience. The first theme, *experience helps*, illuminates the influence participants' prior experiences have on their current classroom management. Theme two, *each classroom has its own language*, describes how participants' relationships with students and teachers influences their experiences. Theme three, *the way I manage*, illustrates the strategies and techniques participants use in planning and preparation, lesson delivery, and managing behavior.

Experience Helps

The participants in this study indicated that prior experience played an important role in preparing them for managing a classroom. They talked about how content knowledge affected their comfort level in the classroom, and how continued experience and professional development will play a part in advancing their classroom management skills. All of the participants indicated that prior "experience helps," and "increases [their] comfort level" in the classroom.

Ashley, a middle school counselor, reported that though "[she] knew it was going to be a trial," her practicum experience was very helpful in making her "[feel] very comfortable in the classroom," and "having a supervisor with [her] during training was help[ful]." Stephanie, a high school counselor, indicated that she had taken "a couple of classes...on [the] history of education and classroom management" and "that [these courses] were definitely very helpful." However, Stephanie went on to state, "...in both my internships I had to do a lot of classroom guidance and...it's definitely a lot more nerve-racking...than small group or individual

counseling.” Lindsey, an elementary school counselor indicated that she “was not trained to manage a classroom” in her graduate training, and “did not have the exposure” to the classroom environment she would have liked.

Prior teaching experience also influenced participants’ experience. Bridget, an elementary school counselor, indicated that her prior teaching experience “influenced [her] classroom management style,” and Stephanie’s semester of teacher training “was definitely helpful” and allowed her to “see things from [a] teacher’s standpoint....learning how to maintain [students’] attention, focus, and discipline.” Whether their training included learning about classroom management techniques or not, all of the participants indicated they initially experienced anxiety. For some “there was a lot bigger learning curve” than for others.

The degree of content knowledge and passion these school counselors held for the subject matter also influenced their comfort level in the classroom. As Stephanie indicated, “planning was minimal because [graduation requirements] are something that I’m intimately familiar with...I already felt like an expert.” School counselors who know their “skill set” and feel “naturally passionate... and interested in” the topic they are teaching, experienced confidence and a greater comfort level in the classroom.

Participants recognized that in addition to prior experience and content knowledge, participants recognized that engaging in professional development activities will increase their comfort in the classroom and their ability to manage it effectively. Lindsey stated, “I would like to take some...continuing education in the summertime...if there ever was a course on classroom management...Anything to do with classroom guidance...I would be interested in.” Engaging in professional development and continuing education activities related to classroom management strategies is a way in which Lindsey felt she could improve upon her skills. She acknowledged

she has “a lot to learn” and learning “what’s normal for teachers and counselors who teach...what are normal obstacles they face, and strategies for handling disruptions” would be helpful.

The school counselors in this study described how the internship experience provided them with a fundamental understanding of classroom management. Prior teaching experience increased confidence and presented some insight into participants’ management style. All of the school counselors interviewed acknowledged they still had a lot to learn, and that professional development and continued experience in the profession will increase their classroom management skills.

Each Classroom Has Its Own Language

Each classroom is a unique constellation created by the personalities, experiences, behaviors and interactions between teacher and student. The participants reported that their experience with classroom management was highly dependent upon the teacher and students in each classroom, and the relationships they had with them. Additionally, the teacher’s classroom management style greatly influenced the experience these school counselors had in managing the classroom while conducting classroom guidance lessons.

The teacher’s classroom management style had a profound effect on Bridget’s experience while conducting classroom guidance lessons. She stated, “We are reliant on somebody else’s management structure...if [the] teacher is a strong manager it is going to be easier.” Conversely, “if [the] teacher is not a strong manager you’ve got an additional level of challenge.” Bridget often asks herself, “Do I manage these kids similarly to the way their teacher manages them?” Additionally, school counselors’ experiences can also be impacted by whether or not the teacher stays in the classroom. Lindsey felt she was “strugglin[g], [and] didn’t really know how to go

about [managing the class when] the teachers left [the room].” However, additional support and a more positive experience ensued for Lindsey when the teacher “stay[ed]...and participate[d] in the lesson...or [was] at the desk just doing some follow up work.” This allowed for the teacher to “chime in and give a lending hand... [if the students were] doing anything that’s not the classroom expectation.”

Building a relationship and communicating with teachers informed the classroom management strategies these school counselors employed. Beth, an elementary school counselor stated, “I need to find out what the teachers are doing in their classrooms and I’ll try to be consistent with that in my classes.” Lindsey reiterated this sentiment, “each classroom has its own language. If you know the cues, and the ‘little sayings’ the teacher uses, it makes managing the classroom easier because the students know exactly what to do.” These school counselors communicate with teachers in an effort to understand the classroom management strategies students are accustomed to. In addition to the influence teachers have on school counselors’ classroom management experience, the relationship that participants have with students is a powerful determinant in the success of their classroom guidance lessons.

Through their relationships with students participants developed mutual respect, managed the classroom more effectively, and differentiated their instruction. Controlling a classroom is difficult when “there is no familiarity with the students,” stated Bridget. Similarly, Beth acknowledged, “when [the students] know that you know their name, they respect you because you respect [them]...it’s a mutual respect...and that makes a world of difference.” There is an advantage to being a school counselor because, “we have those deeply personal relationships” and Bridget has been able to “leverage that in a way that accommodates for the fact that [she] is not in their rooms all day.” Participants indicated they often have insight into the students they

encounter in the classroom because they have worked with them on an individual basis. This helps them to modify their expectations to accommodate the student's needs. Ashley stated, "[W]hen I've got a kid who I know has had a lot of stuff going on at home...and I see them not where I would want them to be, I'm going to cut them some slack."

"Management is relationship" for these school counselors. The relationships they have with the students and the classroom teacher are the most critical factors in their classroom management experience. Teachers' classroom management practices can either enhance or impede school counselors' experience. The relationships these school counselors have with their students allowed them to know their students' needs, and how to maintain control.

The Way I Manage

A significant part of classroom management for these school counselors was planning and preparing their lessons. They talked extensively about the importance of creating and implementing engaging, relevant, and age appropriate lessons which resulted in positive classroom experiences when expectations, routines, rules and consequences were established early. The ability to employ a variety of techniques to manage behavior was also a contributing factor in creating a positive classroom management experience.

For these school counselors "planning is the first step" and "...really critical to successful [classroom] management." Emily, an elementary school counselor stated, "[lesson planning] sometimes can be a little overwhelming because I have K through 5." Lindsey validated Emily's sentiment stating, "When I first started ...planning for the lessons and developing what curriculum I would use...I just felt panicked and I felt rushed because there's a lot of time that had to be given elsewhere." For Bridget lesson planning also involves knowing what resources are available in the classroom.

Typically, you don't have your own classroom. So, I'm walking into somebody else's room that I'm not comfortable with and in order to effectively manage ...I need to have thought through, 'Where are the markers? Do they have crayons? Is there room for this [activity]? Where are they going to sit...stand? How do I do this? Because if I haven't thought through those pieces, I've created a management problem.'"

Bridget indicated that good lesson planning is a powerful anecdote to poor classroom management practices on the part of the classroom teacher. She stated, "[when the teacher is not a strong manager] you've got that challenge and those are not things we can control...the way I manage that is to plan the devil out of it." Planning, "the devil" out of a guidance lesson includes having back-up plans. Back-up plans are important to managing a classroom as Beth pointed out, "you try your best to plan but sometimes...if we end early, or if I notice I'm losing [the students], I have a feelings cube, and I feel like we are still getting something out of [the lesson], but it doesn't require a lot of mental activity." For Stephanie, "It always helps to be...over-prepared...if I don't have anything else planned and one of the activities goes haywire then I'm just kind of screwed. I think being over-prepared and liking your subject matter...helps."

Participants emphasized the importance of implementing creative, relevant, engaging lessons. Ashley stated, I try to do things that keep it very interesting and keep [students'] attention." Bridget believes, "part of the management piece is the buy in from the kids," letting them know, "it matters so much to me that you know this." Rachel, a high school counselor, corroborated, "I think the most important thing is establishing that rapport, grabbing their attention, giving [students] information that is very accessible and relevant to them." Conducting core curriculum lessons that engage students also meant incorporating a variety of activities in

each lesson to meet the needs of the students' different learning styles. Bridget emphasized this point by stating, "If I don't have them doing several things...giving them plenty of time...to do something that they excel in, they're going to start to become unsettled." Classroom management is somewhat dependent on lesson presentation as well. "Some [lessons] work and some don't, and that plays a huge part in the management of the classroom," according to Ashley.

The participants talked about the importance of establishing expectations, routines, rules and consequences early on in the year. The "biggest thing" for Emily is "starting out at the beginning of the year letting [the students] know what I expect, and going over the rules...letting them know what is going to happen [if the rules aren't followed]." Bridget stated it is important that her students "understand the task and understand my expectation," letting the students know at the start of each lesson "what I am going to do so they can see that there is going to be a beginning and an end." When "clear expectations" are established the "[students] very rarely question what's supposed to happen...they understand where to go and when," concluded Emily. These school counselors believe establishing rules and routines, being clear in their expectations, being firm, fair and consistent "is always really helpful."

Effective classroom management strategies create a learning environment that promotes on-task student behaviors. However, even in the best of classrooms there are times when the school counselor must address students' off-task behavior. As Bridget stated:

In a tough [behavioral] situation thirty seconds can mean (makes a blow-up sound and gesture) where somebody is out of their chair, they are talking, moving around. Now it's going to take me five minutes to get [the students] back [on-task] and that's five instructional minutes. In a twenty-five minute lesson that's one-six of my time. [I]f I am

correcting [off-task] behavior [or] talking out...that's not fun. And for the kids who are on-task, well that's just a negative environment.

Participants used several techniques to minimize off-task behavior. Verbal prompts and proximity are two techniques they employed to keep students focused and on-task. Rachel stated, "If [the students] are doing something different, I just ask them to please be respectful of others...and I use my proximity. I walk around. I might get right next to someone who is doing something different." Using proximity allowed Rachel to address students off-task behavior without "calling them out." "Making eye contact [and] keeping things at a good pace, moving, [and] not going off on a lot of tangents" reduces behavioral concerns for Emily.

Positive reinforcement techniques were also used to reduce the probability of misbehavior. Praise and incentives are positive reinforcement techniques that participants employed to manage classroom behavior. Beth explained that the school-wide incentive program along with verbal praise helped to reinforce positive behavior. "Whenever we see a student...sitting quietly during a lesson, and looking and listening, even if it is in the middle of the lesson, we're like 'thank you for listening and being respectful. I like how you're doing that' so that's been a good thing." Using incentives is often a challenge. Participants indicated they don't have a "treasure box" or other classroom based reward systems to use as positive reinforcement. Emily found it helpful to join the special areas Professional Learning Community (PLC) at her school. The PLC formed an incentive program to support positive student behavior while in their special area classes. She found joining this group, and implementing the incentive program "work[ed] really well, for the most part."

All of the participants felt that managing behavior through discipline is counterproductive" to counseling, and they "hate being expected to discipline." Beth

emphasized the importance of following up on a disciplinary encounter with her students after the guidance lesson. “I don’t like being...a disciplinarian.... but when a kid is screaming out in a way that comes off as ... misbehaving...you can tell...as a counselor ...they are just calling out for something.” Participants also detailed their dependence on the classroom teacher for managing specific discipline issues with students. Lindsey stated “finding ways to ask teachers to please stay in the room worked [with] several teachers. [The teacher] know[s] how to reach... the students better than I do because they’re with them all day, every day.”

Planning and preparation, creating engaging, relevant lessons; establishing rules and routines early in the year, and being consistent are key to creating positive classroom experiences. The school counselors in this study indicated they “hate[d] being expected to discipline” preferring to manage behavior through appropriately pacing their lessons, and using subtle behavior management strategies such as proximity, verbal prompts, and eye contact. Verbal praise, as well as classroom or school-wide incentive programs were positive reinforcement strategies that school counselors relied on to minimize off-task student behavior.

Discussion

The three major themes that emerged from this study are *experience helps*, *each classroom has its own language*, and *the way I manage*. These themes illustrate the factors that influenced the classroom management experiences of the novice school counselors who participated in this study. Each theme was stated in the participants’ own words to preserve the veracity of their experiences in the reporting of the results. A discussion of the results, the limitations of this study, and the implications for school counselors, counselor educators, and future research

Experience helps describes the sum of experiences and knowledge that participating novice school counselors brought to their first school counseling placement. Regardless of their previous experiences, all participants described feeling anxiety. This finding is consistent with the finding of Bringman and Lee (2008) and Peterson et al, (2004); and teacher education research that found classroom management to be one of the greatest fears among teacher candidates (Merç, 2011; Wash & Freeman, 2014). Participants also indicated they felt more confident when they were familiar with the content they were presenting in the lesson. Lastly, participants indicated a desire to participate in professional development opportunities that could increase their confidence.

Every classroom has its own language speaks to the impact that the classroom teacher and students bring to the classroom management experience. The unique nature of a classroom's climate is dictated by the relationship between teacher and student, and was the single most impactful factor in participants' classroom management experience. Knowing the management strategies the classroom teacher employs in her/his classroom, and duplicating these during school counseling core curriculum instruction provides students with consistency in expectations, thus reducing disruptive behavior (Fitzsimmons, 1998). Research shows that aggressive management strategies based on exclusionary discipline increases student misbehavior exponentially (Baroody, Rimm-Kaufman, Larsen, & Curby, 2014; Roache & Lewis, 2011). Whereas democratic approaches utilizing positive behavioral support strategies (e.g. using pre-corrections, global and specific praise, and involving students in establishing rules and behavior expectations) decrease disruptive behavior and promote a positive classroom climate (Mitchell & Bradshaw, 2013). When classroom teachers utilized ineffective classroom management strategies the participants in this study had a more difficult time managing

classroom behavior. Whereas their experience was positive in a classroom where the atmosphere embodied a respectful, democratic atmosphere supported by positive behavioral support strategies.

Relationship is the single most effective classroom management strategy one can utilize to manage behavior and create a positive learning environment (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). When teacher – student relationships are constructive, school counselors’ experiences are more favorable. Similarly, when school counselors have positive relationships with their students classroom management tended to be more positive. Moreover, school counselors who know their students are able to engage in differentiated instruction practices that respond to students’ learning needs. Given the importance of relationship and classroom climate on student behavior, it is judicious for school counselors to learn positive behavior support strategies such as Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS) and differentiated instructional practices during their training programs.

The way I manage describes how participants planned their classroom lessons, communicated classroom expectations, and managed student behavior. Participants in this study detailed planning developmentally appropriate core curriculum lessons; a pro-active, preventive approach to classroom management (Roscoe & Orr, 2010). Lesson planning also increases teacher-task behaviors. When teachers engage in teacher-task behaviors (e.g. delivering lessons, asking questions, etc.) students are more likely to display on-task behaviors, reducing the incidence of problematic behaviors (Ratcliff et al., 2010).

The novice school counselors in this study indicated they explained their classroom expectations early in the school year. Evertson and Emmer (1982) emphasized the importance of effective classroom management at the beginning of the school year since it is highly unlikely

for a teacher to move from ineffective to effective management as the school year continues. It is imperative that new school counselors “set the tone” with students at the beginning of the year by establishing rules, routine, and expectations during the initial core curriculum lesson, and refer to them frequently throughout the year.

Nearly all participants described a “hands off” approach to student discipline preferring to leave discipline in the hands of the classroom teacher or administrator in order to preserve positive student-counselor relationships. Consistent with Quarto’s (2007) findings non-punitive approaches to managing student behavior such as eye contact, verbal and nonverbal prompts, proximity control, and recognizing positive student behavior with praise and incentives were used to thwart student misbehavior. This attention to positive student behavior may serve to strengthen rapport between school counselors and students; as research has indicated students report higher levels of affiliation with teachers who use rewards and recognition as a classroom management system (de Jong et al., 2014).

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to this study. First, phenomenological inquiry focuses on the essence of the lived experiences of a specific population, and the findings are drawn from participants’ self-perceptions, thus the data could not be triangulated. Second, the small number of participants drawn from a narrow geographic area, the unequal representation of school levels, and the lack of diversity among participants limits how well findings can be applied to school counselors in general. The findings are best understood through the context of the seven school counselors interviewed for this investigation. Transferability can be determined through considering the detailed descriptions specific to the participants’ setting and situation. Lastly, two of the researchers have had previous experience as classroom teachers. Despite their best

efforts to be aware of and set aside their biases, it is possible their own experiences in classroom management created a bias that placed limitations on their analysis.

Implications for School Counselors

Beginning school counselors may experience anxiety and apprehension during the delivery of school counseling core curriculum classroom instruction. Therefore, the more experience they can receive prior to entering the field the more likely they are to experience positive self-efficacy in their abilities to manage the classroom (Bandura, 1995). Greater competence ensues when school counselors are comfortable with their own knowledge of lesson content. Staying abreast of the professional literature on the subject matter being taught, and engaging in professional development activities that enrich content knowledge and classroom management strategies has shown to increase self-efficacy and strengthen classroom management among teachers (Dixon, Yssel, McConnell, & Hardin, 2014; Newton, Leonard, Evans, & Eastburn, 2012). The same can be applied to school counselors. Table A1 lists specific strategies school counselors may consider to strengthen their classroom management skills.

Implications for Counselor Educators

Prior experience with classroom management is necessary for new school counselors. Teacher preparation literature suggests that supervised experiences (Espin & Yell, 1994) coupled with coursework in classroom management (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012) are most beneficial in impacting teacher classroom management effectiveness. While school counseling programs may not be able to offer a course in classroom management, opportunities for classroom management instruction should begin with students' first school based experience (Peterson & Deuschle, 2006).

Counselor educators should anticipate apprehension from school counseling students during their school-based experiences. It is important for counselor educators to normalize these feelings while providing experiences to build students' confidence. School counseling coursework should include multiple opportunities for observational learning and practice in the development and delivery of school counseling core curricula for diverse age groups (Bringman & Lee, 2008). (See Table A1). As there is a lack of specific literature related to school counseling and classroom management, counselor educators are encouraged to adapt extant literature from teacher preparation when training school counselors. If a counselor education program does not have the resources available to teach classroom management skills within the school counseling program, school counseling students could take elective coursework related to teaching and learning, and classroom management in their institution's teacher preparation program.

Implications for Future Research

While this research expands our knowledge and understanding of school counselors' experiences in classroom management during the delivery of core curriculum classroom instruction and authenticates existing literature on the topic (Bringman & Lee, 2003; Geltner et al, 2011; Peterson et al, 2004; Quarto, 2007), further research is warranted. The subjective nature of self-report data leaves room for more empirical study. For example, a mixed-methods approach that includes observations of school counselors' classroom management practices, the use of semi-structured interviews, and/or surveys of classroom teachers' observations and students' experiences could allow for triangulation and potential corroboration of findings. Research that involves a larger, more diverse participant sample across a larger demographic area could potentially validate this study and allow for broader application of the findings.

Lastly, exploring the classroom management practices of more tenured school counselors and comparing them to novice school counselors' practices could aid in the development of effective training models.

Conclusion

Effective classroom management is one of the most impactful contributions to students' academic success (Marzano & Marzano, 2003); therefore it is imperative that school counselors learn and practice effective classroom management strategies while teaching core curriculum lessons. This is often a challenge for school counselors who enter the profession without prior teaching experience (Bringman & Lee, 2008; Peterson et al., 2004). However, counselor educators can help build novice school counselors' self-efficacy and competence in classroom management by providing them with learning opportunities that include observation, didactic instruction, and practice throughout their training program.

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Appendix

Table 1
Classroom Management Action Strategies for School Counselors and Counselor Educators by Theme

School Counselors	Counselor Educators
Experience Helps	
Observe classroom teaching early and often during training program.	Provide opportunities early and often in the training program for classroom observations and analysis.
Gain classroom training experience as part of practicum/internship coursework.	Have students deliver core curriculum lessons to peers in foundational school counseling courses.
If classroom management coursework is not built into the training program, take a course in a teacher education program as an elective.	Structure practicum/internship assignments to include core curriculum lesson delivery - observe and provide feedback during field experiences (see Peterson & Deuschle, 2006).
Stay current on core curriculum lesson content.	Utilize an integrative model for building classroom management skills (see Bundy & Studer, 2011).
Engage in continuing education/professional development specific to classroom management.	Have students take elective courses in teaching & learning, and classroom management.
Each Classroom Has Its Own Language	
Develop positive relationships w/teachers; observe and talk about their management strategies. If effective, adopt teachers' classroom management strategies.	Teach collaboration strategies throughout training program; provide case scenarios & role play to reinforce & practice collaboration skills.
Develop your own classroom management plan.	Have students' interview teachers about teaching & learning strategies, and classroom management.
Build & maintain positive relationships with all students.	Have students develop their own classroom management plan & share w/classmates (see Monroe et al., 2010)
Learn students' names; greet them at the outset of each lesson; and use them often during lesson delivery.	Observe and provide feedback to school counseling students on their student interactions during core curriculum lesson delivery.
Know your students learning styles and deficits; employ differentiated instructional strategies.	Provide instruction on teaching and learning; learning styles, and differentiated instructional practices.

(Continued)

Table 1 Continued

Classroom Management Action Strategies for School Counselors and Counselor Educators by Theme

School Counselors	Counselor Educators
The Way I Manage	
Develop/deliver engaging lesson plans that include multiple learning modalities, and have a back-up plan for each lesson.	Include lesson planning activities/assignments including workshop style format with peers (see Ozogul et al., 2008).
Become familiar with and practice school-wide expectations and rule.	Provide knowledge of school-wide behavior programs such as PBIS.
Establish rules, routines, procedure, and behavior expectations in partnership with students; reinforce at onset of each lesson; refer back to them as necessary.	Include case scenarios and role-play activities related to managing student classroom behavior including reinforcement of positive behaviors.
Use proximity, eye contact, verbal/non-verbal cues, and acknowledge positive students behaviors.	Provide exposure to functions of behavior & behavior modification strategies.

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Expert Clinical Supervisors' Descriptions of Easy and Challenging Supervisees

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Expert supervisors provided descriptions of what made two of their recent supervisees easy or challenging. Content analysis revealed seven categories of experts' descriptions for those supervisees. Supervision behaviors, clinical competencies, traits and personal background, and self-awareness/self-reflectivity categories were the most frequently reported categories, regardless of the supervisee being easy or challenging. Comparisons of the seven categories did not yield significant differences in their frequencies for the easy and challenging supervisees. Importantly, the experts appeared to rely on objective (observable) rather than subjective assessments of their supervisees, whether easy or challenging. Limitations and implications for future research and practice are discussed.

Keywords: Expert supervisor, easy supervisee, challenging supervisee

Clinical supervision is one of the fundamental learning and training opportunities for counselor trainees (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014; Borders & Brown, 2005). Accordingly, it is within the supervision process that supervisors must assess and evaluate supervisees' competencies as well as their suitability for the profession. Although clinical supervisors are considered to be the conductor of supervision, what supervisees bring into and contribute to the supervision cannot be discounted, as their self-presentations considerably influence the supervisory process (Borders & Brown, 2005). Across professions, clinical supervisors have identified supervisee characteristics/behaviors and traits that influence the conduct of supervision. Early on, Rodenhauser, Rudisill, and Painter (1989) asked psychiatrists to list attributes that facilitated residents' learning of psychotherapy. They grouped the responses into five categories: basic personal qualities (e.g., reliability, openness, interpersonal competence), facilitators of the relationship with supervisors (e.g., interest, enthusiasm, willingness to change),

facilitators of relationships with patients (e.g., interpersonal curiosity, flexibility, empathy), facilitators of learning theory (e.g., intellectual openness, habit of reading), and facilitators of learning skills (e.g., minimal defensiveness, introspection, receptivity to feedback).

Within the counseling field, researchers have interviewed experienced supervisors about their interactions with both highly successful and unsuccessful supervisees (Norem, Magnuson, Wilcoxon, & Arbel, 2006; Wilcoxon, Norem, & Magnuson, 2005). Supervisors reported six categories of attributes of “stellar supervisees” (Norem et al., 2006, p. 33): maturity (e.g., understanding of self based on diverse life experiences), autonomy (e.g., self-confidence, accepts feedback, active in supervision), perspicacity (e.g., strong knowledge and skills, cognitive complexity, intuition), motivation (e.g., proactive, committed to growth), self-awareness (e.g., aware of strengths and weaknesses as well as their emotional responses), and openness to experience (e.g., willing to take risks, open to feedback). In contrast, supervisee characteristics that contributed to “lousy supervision outcomes” (Wilcoxon et al., 2005, p. 31) were categorized into four areas: intrapersonal development (e.g., weak ego, unresolved personal issues, unwilling to examine self), interpersonal development (e.g., poor social skills, insensitivity, unwilling to accept feedback), cognitive development (e.g., lack of cognitive complexity, concreteness and rigidity in thinking), and counselor development (e.g., lack of basic knowledge and skills, motivation to change, and understanding of counseling process). Within counseling psychology, Vespia, Heckman-Stone, and Delworth (2002) created a measure of behaviors and characteristics of students who “use supervision well” (p. 58). They included eight subscales describing effective supervisee behaviors, such as complies with expectations, shows responsibility, demonstrates initiative and independent thinking, exhibits openness and nondefensiveness, demonstrates self-insight, uses effective relationship/interpersonal skills, demonstrates growth

and risk-taking behaviors, and exhibits positive personal characteristics. Across these studies, then, researchers have found that experienced supervisors' reports of good and difficult supervisees' descriptions were not limited to clinical competencies, but also supervisees' personal characteristics as well as supervision attitudes and behaviors.

Most recently, supervision researchers have begun to explore expert supervisors' perspectives and practices in clinical supervision, including their perspectives on supervisee contributions to the supervision process. The perspectives of experts were of interest as researchers in several fields (e.g., Chase & Simon, 1973; Glaser, 1985; Patel, Glaser, & Arocha, 2000) have reported that experts are able to think and process knowledge in a deeper and more structured manner than their less experienced counterparts. Several supervision researchers have explored experts' supervisory strategies in the face of difficult situations (Grant, Schofield, & Crawford, 2012; Nelson, Barnes, Evans, & Triggiano, 2008) and supervisees' contributions to those. Supervisors in Nelson et al. (2008) reported supervisee factors that contributed to conflict as resistance, lack of responsibility for work, evaluation anxiety, negative transference, inadequate skills, and unethical or unprofessional behavior. In order to manage conflict with these supervisees, supervisors described reflective (e.g., working to empathize with supervisees' experiences), interpersonal (e.g., working hard not to shame or embarrass a supervisee when giving difficult feedback), and technical (e.g., direct observations of the supervisee to gain more information about their skills) strategies. Similarly, Grant et al. (2012) reported supervisee incompetence and unethical behavior, supervisee characteristics (e.g., arrogance, defensiveness), specific problems in the supervisory relationship, and supervisor countertransference as the broad domains of experts' supervisory difficulties. Expert supervisors managed these difficulties using avoidant (e.g., withheld validation, ignored), relational (e.g., named the difficulty,

validated and normalized the issue), reflective (e.g., remained mindful, patient, transparent), and confrontive (e.g., confronted tentatively at first and, after assessing the level of directness needed, confronting the issue directly) interventions.

In a recent study (Kemer, Borders, & Willse, 2014), expert supervisors generated a large list of statements regarding their thoughts while planning, conducting, and evaluating their supervision work. Assessment of their supervisees was one of the main areas experts considered. Demonstrating an extensive awareness of their responsibility to assess their supervisees, experts reported a broad range of supervisee characteristics and behaviors that they considered in their supervision work, including those similar to supervisors in previous studies (e.g., clinical skills, response to supervision, self-awareness). In a follow-up study, Kemer, Borders, and Yel (2017) focused on the expert supervisors' supervision priorities while working with both easy and challenging supervisees. With their easy supervisees, experts prioritized assessment and conceptualization of the supervisee as well as administrative considerations (e.g., paperwork) of supervision. On the other hand, with their challenging supervisees, experts focused on components of the supervisory relationship. When their challenging supervisees were compared to the easy supervisees, experts prioritized a focus on their own self-reflection and assessment, supervisory relationship, administrative considerations (e.g., paperwork), and assessment of the supervisee and his/her work. Kemer et al. (2017) reported that, regardless of working with easy or challenging supervisees, fundamental priorities of experts' supervision work included assessment and conceptualization of the supervisee and his/her work as well as administrative considerations.

Similar to the previous studies, experts have noted supervisees' inadequate/deficient clinical skills, lack of investment in the clinical work, personal difficulties, and supervisory

relationship issues as characteristics that contribute to difficult supervisory situations. In the face of easy or challenging supervisory situations, experts in these studies considered assessment of their supervisees and supervision work comprehensively, used various interventions (e.g., relational, confrontive), and engaged in reflective practices.

Although offering valuable information about good/successful and difficult supervisees, none of these researchers specifically explored experts' descriptions of their easy and challenging supervisees. Instead, they focused on experienced supervisors' descriptions of a supervisee profile (e.g., supervisees who contribute to stellar and lousy supervision outcomes), what experts considered in their supervision practices, or experts' supervisory strategies or priorities to handle easy or difficult situations. Moreover, neither of the researchers reported how pervasive descriptions of good and/or difficult supervisees were. Thus, we do not know if any of the descriptive categories are reported more frequently or if frequencies would differ for easy supervisees when compared to challenging supervisees. Despite similarities in the characteristics of the good/successful and difficult supervisees across previous studies, furthermore, we wondered whether experts' highly organized thinking would lead to similar categories for separate supervisee profiles and what those categories might be. Given their ability to think in more cognitively complex ways, we also questioned if experts' descriptions would offer any nuances around supervisees' self-presentations. In other words, an examination of expert supervisors' descriptions for their easy and challenging supervisees to explore common categories could contribute to our efforts to assess supervisees and shape supervision practices.

In this study, we sought to understand experts' descriptions of supervisees with whom they believed they worked well and those they found challenging. The overall research question of the present study was how do expert supervisors describe their easy and challenging

supervisees? Within this research question, we also explored whether any of these categories were more frequently reported for a particular supervisee profile (easy or challenging).

Method

Participants

The sample in the current study consisted of nine females (56.3%) and seven males (43.8%), equaling a total of 16 expert supervisors. The 15 Caucasians (93.8%) and one Asian/Pacific Islander (6.2%) had a mean age of 53.19 ($SD = 12.46$; range of 33-76). Fourteen experts held doctoral degrees from Counselor Education (87.5%) and two held doctoral degrees from Counseling Psychology (12.5%). All experts were faculty members; nine were Full Professors (56.3%), five were Associate Professors (31.3%), and two were Assistant Professors (12.5%). Experts held various professional credentials; 12 were National Certified Counselors (75%), 11 were Licensed Professional Counselors (68.8%), two were Licensed Psychologists (12.5%), 10 were Approved Clinical Supervisors (62.5%), and four also held other professional credentials (25%).

The 16 expert supervisors had practiced supervision from a range of eight to 42 years ($M = 21.63$, $SD = 10.50$). Their typical supervisee profiles included practicum master's students ($n = 12$, 75%), internship master's students ($n = 14$, 87.5%), doctoral practicum/internship students ($n = 14$, 87.5%), and doctoral supervisors ($n = 12$, 75%). They had published six supervision-related books (without counting each edition of a book), 49 book chapters ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 4.34$), and 184 peer-reviewed articles ($M = 11.50$, $SD = 12.66$); presented 282 professional presentations ($M = 18.80$, $SD = 20.07$), given 50 workshops ($M = 8.33$, $SD = 6.41$) on supervision, and had been nominated/recognized with 42 awards for their supervision or mentoring ($M = 2.80$, $SD = 1.82$).

Procedures

The current study was part of a larger project conducted to examine expert supervisors' cognitions (Kemer, 2012). As we were aware that an expert supervisor's description would depend on the supervision setting where supervision occurs (e.g., academia, mental health agencies), we paid close attention to specifying our selection criteria. In this study, we used academic criteria for the selection of our expert participants. These criteria involved (1) a doctoral degree in either counselor education or counseling psychology, (2) experience in teaching and supervising student counselors and/or supervisors, and (3) extensive involvement in scholarly activities in supervision. An award or nomination as distinguished mentor, counselor educator, etc., was an optional criterion.

We used purposive sampling to find and select our expert supervisors. First, following the criteria, we reviewed faculty and/or personal websites of the supervision scholars known to us from literature, conferences, and professional organizations. Then, we created a master list of expert supervisors representing diverse cultural backgrounds and geographical locations in the U.S. This resulted in a list of 44 experts who received email invitations to participate in our study. Of the 44, 16 experts, who also participated in Kemer et al. (2014) study, responded to the current study.

We asked experts to identify two of their recent supervisees, one they worked well with and one who challenged them. Then, experts responded to two open-ended questions about what made those supervisees easy or challenging in their supervision sessions (i.e., What made the supervisee you identified easy/challenging to work with?). In analyzing their responses, we first conducted a content analysis and then calculated frequencies to examine the differences among categories.

Data Analyses

Content analysis is “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorff, 2012, p. 24). In order to make inferences from experts’ written descriptions of their easy and challenging supervisees to the supervisee characteristics in clinical supervision, we conducted a content analysis. Both qualitative and quantitative procedures are appropriate in content analysis (Insch, Moore, & Murphy, 1997). Thus, we used both procedures to examine the nuances of our data. We followed Insch et al. (1997) and Neuendorf’s (2002) guidelines to conduct our content analysis. Two coders worked on the data in several rounds and consulted with an external auditor before finalizing the content analysis.

Initially, each of the coders (first and second authors) independently read through all of the descriptions and generated a list of potential categories (coding scheme) that emerged from the data, and then conducted a pilot unit analysis (sampling) of three randomly selected experts’ easy and challenging supervisee descriptions. We then came together to conceptualize and operationalize the potential categories and determine the unit of analysis (i.e., how to break up the descriptions for coding). First, we agreed on six underlying categories across both supervisee profiles and defined the content of each category. We defined *Traits and Personal Background of the Supervisee* as the supervisees’ cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal characteristics, such as cognitive complexity or being easy-going, mature, and/or bright. The *Preparation for/Investment/Engagement in Supervision* category involved supervisees’ attitude toward supervision, response/receptivity to feedback, and/or traits as a learner, such as being motivated or not prepared. We described *Counseling Skills/Conceptualization Abilities* as the supervisees’ competency level and ability to apply feedback and make changes. *Self-awareness/Self-*

reflectivity was characterized as having awareness and reflection abilities, such as being able to critique self or explore biases and values. *Supervisory Relationship* involved supervisees' relational qualities in supervision, such as being able to disagree with the supervisor while keeping boundaries and collegiality or being unresponsive to here-and-now work in supervision. *Opinion/Attitude toward Client, Site, and/or Supervisor* denoted the characteristics of being judgmental of the client, supervisor, or clinical site, and/or invested in the clients and counseling work at their site. Second, we reviewed the pilot unit analysis and agreed to define each unit as a single described characteristic or behavior of the supervisee (e.g., bright, did not follow through).

Next, we separately assigned the pilot units to the agreed-upon categories and met again to discuss. In this second meeting, we disagreed on 11 assignments of the 44 units from three participants' data, yielding an inter-rater agreement of .75 for the pilot unit assignments, indicating moderately high agreement strength (Gwet, 2012). We examined the disagreements and came to a consensus about unit assignments to the categories before performing the procedure for the rest of the data set. In this meeting, we also agreed on the need to add a new, seventh category: *Supervisors' Personal View/Opinion of the Supervisee* was defined as the supervisors' own views of their similarities or differences with the supervisee and feelings towards the supervisee.

For the final unit analysis, one of us worked on the odd-numbered (randomly selected) participants' descriptions whereas the other completed the even-numbered descriptions. Then, we e-mailed the units coded into the descriptive categories to each other for review. In the third consensus meeting, we disagreed on the assignments of 23 units out of 224, yielding an inter-rater reliability of .90 (high agreement strength, Gwet, 2012). We also double-coded one of the units to both preparation for/investment/engagement in supervision and self-awareness/self-

reflectivity categories. Krippendorff (2012) suggested that qualitative researchers of content analysis value double coding due to the binary nature of the texts, whereas quantitative researchers avoid overlapping units as it is difficult to enumerate them. Therefore, we used double coding in our content analysis, but eliminated the double-coded unit from the quantitative part (see Chi-square analysis) of this study.

In the last step of content analysis, an external auditor was asked to review the final assignments to provide a validity control over the coders' work. The external auditor agreed with one double-coded unit and made eight comments about the meaning of the statements. Coders reviewed and discussed these comments and finalized the content analysis without making any further changes.

For the descriptive statistics, we first calculated the frequencies of units for each of the descriptive categories across the participants for the easy and challenging supervisees separately. Next, we computed frequencies of experts in each of the descriptive categories for the easy and challenging supervisees. Lastly, to examine for the relationships among the frequency of units per categories and the two supervisee profiles (i.e., easy and challenging), we conducted a Chi-square analysis.

Results

Content analysis of the experts' descriptions for their easy and challenging supervisees yielded 268 units assigned to the seven categories. The 268 units exceeded the minimum of 167 units needed to generalize the results of this content analysis to the population of easy and challenging supervisees' descriptions with a 99% confidence interval (-/+ 10% sampling error; Neuendorf, 2002). The mean number of units by participant was 16.81 ($SD = 6.90$, range 9-35), while the mean number of units by category was 38.43 ($SD = 34.36$, range 6-106). In each

category, different numbers of experts reported descriptions for the easy and challenging supervisees. In the following sections, we will present each category separately for easy and challenging supervisees based on the frequencies by units (see Figure 1) and frequency by experts (see Table 1), and then report results of the Chi-square analysis.

Descriptions of Easy Supervisees

Experts' descriptions involved a total of 147 units representing all seven categories for the easy supervisees (reported by descending number of units). As shown in Table 1, the largest number of supervisors and units were in the *preparation for/investment/engagement in supervision* category; supervisors ($n = 15$) reported 54 descriptions (units) for their easy supervisees. Some of these descriptions were "... eager to learn ... open to the supervision process with a lot of enthusiasm ...," "... took the initiative ... responded well to feedback ... initiated interaction and always responded in a timely manner...," "... was invested in her own development, sought out growth-related opportunities, and was engaged in supervision process ... open to multiple perspectives..."

In the *counseling skills/conceptualization abilities* category, supervisors ($n = 13$) described easy supervisees with 27 units. Descriptions of the experts included "... would challenge herself by taking on diverse clients and would utilize a variety of techniques and new counseling theories ... was willing to take risks and attempt new, more advanced techniques ...," "... synthesized information and feedback ... applied knowledge and suggestions in next sessions ... saw bigger picture of client/s ... grasped basic skills ... engaged in professional and ethical behavior ..."

Supervisors ($n = 9$) reported 25 descriptions in the *traits and personal background of the supervisee* category, such as "... was bright ... talented and very capable ... mature, had a great

sense of humor ...,” and “... was easy going, friendly ... able to relax and not always take this seriously ...”

For *Self-awareness/self-reflectivity*, experts ($n = 11$) included 24 statements. Examples of experts’ descriptions were “...*insightful ... reflective, self-aware ... willing to explore self and biases/values, internal processes ...*,” and “... *was self-aware ... knew her limitations/strengths ... very accepting of self ...*”

Experts’ ($n = 5$) statements in the *supervisory relationship* category totaled 10 descriptions, “... *our interactions were close to collegial. Yet, she was always respectful and never crossed supervisor-supervisee boundaries*”

For *Opinion/attitude toward client, site, and/or supervisor*, experts ($n = 4$) had four descriptions, such as “... *invested in client welfare and improvement (thought lots about how to help client) ...*,” and “... *loved the work he was doing ...*”

Lastly, experts ($n = 3$) had three descriptions in the *supervisors’ personal view/opinion of the supervisee* category, including “*I really liked her as a person*” and “...*similar philosophically/theoretically to the supervisor ...*”

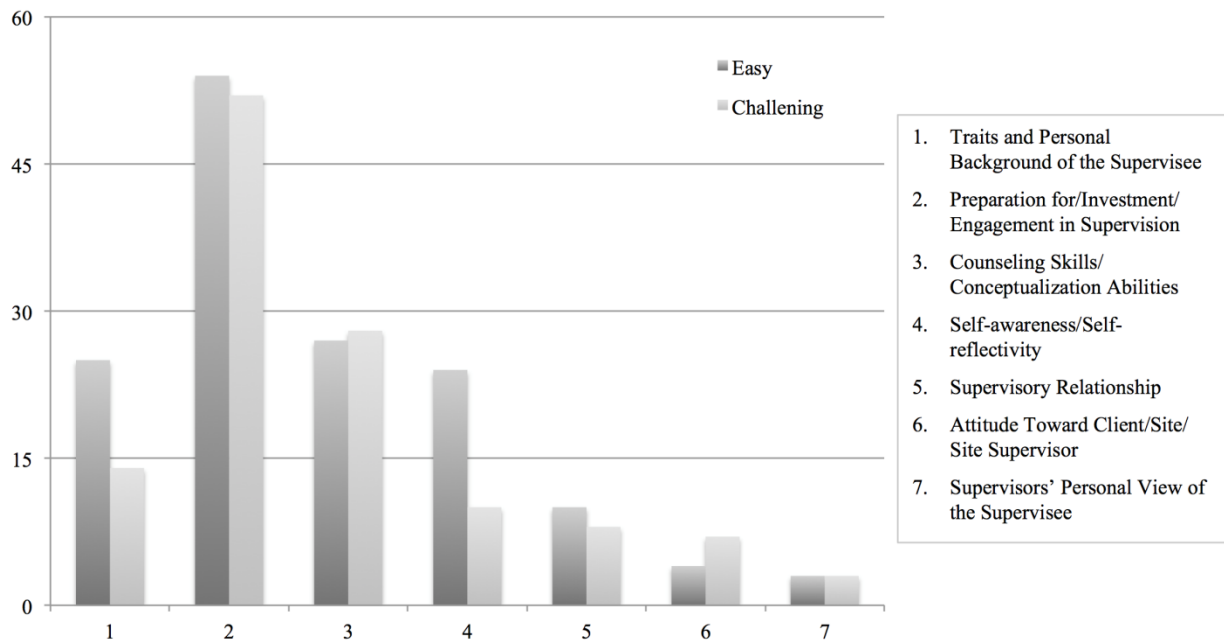


Figure 1. Representation of the unit frequencies for easy and challenging supervisees across categories.

Descriptions of Challenging Supervisees

Experts' statements describing challenging supervisees consisted of 122 units representing all seven categories (again reported in descending order of units). Similar to the easy supervisees, experts' ($n = 16$) had the most descriptions for their challenging supervisees in the *preparation for/investment/engagement in supervision* category, with 54 statements (see Table 1). Some of these descriptions included "... *defensive ... closed/rigid ... knew the right way to do something ... resistant to see this or take perspective of client ... not able to benefit from supervision, unable to hear supervisor feedback ... unreceptive to positive feedback ...*," "... *sometimes difficult to read ... could not always determine what she was thinking or wanting from me. When asked directly, could not always articulate her needs. Was less invested in supervision process (?) - hard to tell ...*," and "... *unable to be open ... unwilling to acknowledge*

weaknesses/mistakes. Unable to meet logistical/administrative expectations. All excuses and apologies ...”

For *Counseling skills and conceptualization abilities*, experts ($n = 10$) reported 28 descriptions, including “... *rarely followed through on feedback ... No big, theoretical picture of client ... grasped basic skills, no reflection of feeling (not grasp of more advanced counseling skills) ...*,” and “... *misapplying skills from previous career to counseling task ... multiple interventions to get her to see how she was misapplying skills and misinterpreting counseling literature/theory (e.g., being present) ... misunderstood/had own definitions of counseling skills. Avoided client’s negative emotions ... limited use of goal-setting ...*”

In the *traits and personal background of the supervisee* category, experts ($n = 8$) stated 14 descriptions for their challenging supervisees, such as “... *fragile ... Dualistic thinker. Moralizing ... Personal issues (trauma history) override ability to connect with client and supervisor ...*,” and “... *Concrete ... Low level maturity ...*”

Experts’ ($n = 7$) descriptions in the *self-awareness/self-reflectivity* category included 10 statements, such as “...*Unwilling (or less willing/able) to engage in self-reflection, e.g., about own processes, values, biases ... impasses in relationship with client ...*,” and “... *belief that s/he did not need to learn a lot ...*”

Experts ($n = 7$) had eight descriptions around the *Supervisory relationship*, including “... *silent/unresponsive to here and now ...*,” “... *difficult to ‘connect’ with ...*,” and “... *attitude to supervisor was inappropriate ...*”

Fewer experts ($n = 4$) had *Opinion/attitude toward client, site, and/or supervisor* descriptions, with seven statements such as “... *judgmental – even angry with client (and showed it) ...*” and “... *this supervisee simply did not like me (s/he told me) ...*”

Three experts provided three *Supervisors' personal view/opinion of the supervisee* descriptions for the challenging supervisees, such as “...*Negative prior emotions (mine) towards supervisee before working with her ...*” and “...*Different theories/philosophies ...*”

Table 1.

Frequencies of Units and Expert Supervisors within each Category for Easy and Challenging Supervisees

Category	Easy Supervisee		Challenging Supervisee		Total	
	Units (n)	Experts (n)	Units (n)	Experts (n)	Units (n)	Experts (n)
Traits and Personal Background of the Supervisee	25	9	14	8	39	11
Preparation for/Investment/Engagement in Supervision	54	15	52	16	106	16
Counseling Skills/Conceptualization Abilities	27	13	28	10	55	15
Self-awareness/Self-reflectivity	24	11	10	7	34	13
Supervisory Relationship	10	5	8	7	18	10
Attitude toward Client/Site/Site Supervisor	4	4	7	4	11	11
Supervisors' Personal View of the Supervisee	3	3	3	3	6	4

Total n of experts = 16

Chi-square Analysis

A Chi-square analysis was conducted to examine the frequency of descriptive units within each category by the two profiles, easy and challenging supervisees. First, we checked the minimum cell size assumption of Chi-square test of independence (i.e., at least 80% of the cells had expected cell counts more than 5 and no cell had an expected value of less than one; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Our data slightly violated this assumption (79% of the cells had expected cell counts more than 5 and all the cells had an expected value of more than one). The Chi-square analysis did not reveal significant relationships among the seven descriptive categories and two supervisee profiles [$\chi^2 (6, 267) = 8.42, p > .01$]. In other words, the number of

descriptive units for easy and challenging supervisees in each category did not differ significantly.

Discussion

Expert supervisors' descriptions of what made their supervisees easy or challenging in their supervision sessions were organized into seven common categories. Our categories involved descriptions of supervisees' contributing/hindering personal traits and background, un/desired behaviors toward supervision, in/competencies to perform counseling skills and conceptualize the cases, self-awareness and self-reflection in/capabilities, supervisory relationship mis/behaviors, and positive/negative attitudes toward the clients, site, and/or supervisor as well as experts' personal views and opinions of the supervisee. In these categories, our experts provided similar numbers of descriptions for their easy and challenging supervisees. In other words, none of the categories appeared to be a more specific description for either of the supervisee profiles, and both easy and challenging supervisees' descriptions were equally represented in all seven categories. Our descriptive categories supported previous findings (e.g., Norem et al., 2005; Nelson et al., 2008) of good and challenging supervisees' traits and behaviors.

Our experts characterized their easy supervisees as having desired behaviors toward supervision, counseling skills and conceptualization competencies, high self-awareness and reflection, supportive personal traits and background, and positive supervisory relationship qualities, as well as constructive attitudes toward clients, site, and/or the supervisor. Similar to the previous study reports (Norem et al., 2005; Rodenhauser et al., 1989), easy supervisees were frequently described as bright, invested, engaged, open to feedback and experience, as well as highly self-reflective and good at keeping boundaries while being assertive within the supervisor

relationship. Thus, experts said they worked well with supervisees who were more active and open in the supervision process, up for challenges and risks in their clinical practices, willing to explore self in relation to their practices, and capable of being collegial in the supervisory relationship. With these attitudes and qualities, supervisees appeared to be more likely to contribute to the effective supervisory processes.

Our experts' descriptions for the challenging supervisees also supported findings from previous studies (Grant et al., 2012; Nelson et al., 2008; Wilcoxon et al., 2005). Besides undesirable behaviors toward supervision and lack of competencies to perform counseling skills and conceptualize the cases, challenging supervisees according to our experts possessed hindering personal traits and background, deficiencies in self-awareness and self-reflection, and negative supervisory relationship characteristics and attitudes toward the clients, site, and/or the supervisor. Our experts described their challenging supervisees as rigid in their way of thinking, unprepared and uncooperative in the supervision process, less skilled/competent than where they were developmentally expected to be, unable to engage in self-reflection, and difficult to connect with. Hence, our experts were challenged in their work with supervisees who did not seem to believe they had a lot to learn, and who were characterized by lack of investment in supervision, incompetent functioning in their clinical work, unresolved personal difficulties, challenges with self-awareness/reflection, and weak supervisory alliance. Challenging supervisees did not work with their supervisors to obtain the most out of supervision process or enhance their personal and professional development.

Characterizing both supervisee profiles, the largest frequencies of experts' descriptive units cumulated in the supervisees' *preparation for/investment/engagement in supervision, counseling skills/conceptualization abilities, traits and personal background, and self-*

awareness/self-reflectivity categories (highest to lowest). With these categories describing both their easy and challenging supervisees, experts appeared to primarily articulate supervisees' commitment to supervision, clinical abilities to be effective with their clients, personal traits that contributed to their ability, and self-awareness and willingness to engage in self-reflection. In reading the descriptors from these categories, a potential reflection of their expert status seemed evidence. These categories seemed to include more objective assessments of specific supervisee behaviors. In other words, most of the experts' descriptions were based in observational factors, effective and ineffective behaviors, and/or characteristics of the supervisees. On the other hand, categories that appeared to involve expert supervisors' more subjective assessment of the supervisees appeared less frequently, again across both profiles. These categories included supervisees' *supervisory relationship qualities*, *their attitudes toward client/site/site supervisor* categories, and *experts' own personal view of the supervisee*. In short, when describing their easy and challenging supervisees, expert supervisors appeared to provide more concrete and objective descriptions of their supervisees' behaviors and/or characteristics than their own experience of the relationship and supervisee.

At first glance, these results seem to contradict those of previous studies in which the supervisory relationship was identified as a critical aspect of experts' supervision work with particularly challenging situations and supervisees (e.g., Grant et al., 2012; Kemer et al., 2017). This finding may indicate, however, that experts tend to rely on objective rather than subjective assessments of their supervisees to inform, prioritize, and choose interventions that use the supervisory relationship as the primary vehicle for their work. This interpretation would be in line with other research on experts, in that experts focused on more principle-based, solution-

focused conceptualizations while their novice counterparts presented more concrete components of the problem (Chi, Glaser, & Rees, 1982).

All or most of our experts' descriptions were represented in the supervisees' *preparation for/investment/engagement in supervision, counseling skills/conceptualization abilities, self-awareness/self-reflectivity, traits and personal background, attitudes toward client/site/site supervisor, and supervisory relationship* categories (most to least frequent). Thus, these six categories sufficiently represented our experts' descriptions for their easy and challenging supervisees. In contrast, the *supervisors' personal view/opinion of the supervisee* category represented a small number of experts. However, this category was a unique finding in the current study. Some of our experts expressed their own personal views/opinions of the supervisee (e.g., liked the student, negative prior emotions (mine) towards supervisee before working with her/him) as contributing to what made their supervisees easy or challenging. These experts seemed to be aware of their positive or negative personal views of the supervisee and their influence on the supervision practices; they stated them rather factually rather than with emotion, however. Experts' awareness of their personal views/opinions or countertransference reactions (e.g., Grant et al., 2012; Ladany, Constantine, Miller, Erickson, & Muse-Burke, 2000) is supportive of the expertise literature. Glaser and Chi (1988) identified strong self-monitoring skills as one of the key characteristics of experts from different fields. In Kemer et al.'s study (2014), one of the five areas of expert clinical supervisors' supervision thoughts was their self-assessment and reflection, including awareness of their own feelings and biases. Expert supervisors in other studies also prioritized and used self-assessment and reflection in challenging supervisory situations (e.g., Grant et al., 2012; Kemer et al., 2017). Thus, experts' awareness and reports of their personal views/opinions of the both easy and challenging

supervisees appear to be crucial indicators of experts' inclination to acknowledge and, potentially, address their own countertransference as well as feelings and biases.

Limitations

This study also comes with limitations. First, the descriptions and categories are limited to the experts who participated in this study. A different group of experts (e.g., from different supervisory settings, with a diverse race/ethnicity backgrounds) might report different descriptions and categories (e.g., multicultural similarities or differences). For example, in a study of cross-ethnic/racial supervision dyads, Burkard, Knox, Clarke, Phelps, and Inman (2014) found European American supervisors focused on supervisees-of-color's interpersonal skills while supervisors-of-color identified lack of cultural sensitivity. Second, we did not ask our participants to focus on a specific supervisee developmental/experience level (e.g., practicum counselor, doctoral supervisor). An examination of specific supervisee developmental/experience level might reveal different descriptions and categories. Despite representing a developmentally multifarious profile, the descriptions and categories obtained in this study cannot be attributed to a specific developmental level. Third, the sample size of the descriptive units in this content analysis was sufficient with the assumption of a higher level of sampling error; thus, our data slightly violated the Chi-square analysis expected cell-count assumption. Further studies with a larger unit sample size may yield confirmation for our findings and more generalizable results.

Implications for Future Research and Practice

Findings of the current study have implications for both future research and clinical supervision practices. Further research studies to understand experts' practices with their supervisees are needed. In the current study, we could not detect any differences when reading the descriptors based on demographics (e.g., age, years of experience as a supervisor, faculty

position) of the supervisors, and none stood out in terms of tone, wording, or unique focus in any of the categories. Studies of supervisors in other settings (e.g., mental health agencies, schools, inpatient facilities), however, might reveal different descriptions of easy and challenging supervisees.

Across studies of expert supervisors (e.g., Kemer et al., 2014; Nelson et al., 2008), including this study, there is a good consensus on experts' structured thinking and self-monitoring skills. Thus, further studies on experts' more nuanced descriptions and/or actual interactions with these supervisees should be examined through process research to illuminate how good/bad supervisee characteristics are manifested, what expert supervisors actually do with these supervisees, and what is effective (e.g., interventions, use of relationship). Moreover, in those studies, examinations of beginning supervisors as well as experts would inform supervisor training and our understanding of supervisor development. Of particular interest may be similarities and differences in the self-reflections of experts and beginning supervisors, and research on how to help new supervisors move toward experts' reflective abilities as a way of enhancing their supervisory practice.

Our findings also have implications for clinical supervisors and supervisor training programs. Descriptions of easy and challenging supervisees in this study may help supervisors reflect on their own experiences with supervisees and develop a comprehensive assessment of their supervisees. Easy supervisees appeared more likely to get the most out of their training by becoming active participants and agents of their development as counselors. Supervisors may want to educate their supervisees about these characteristics, particularly in the initial stages of supervisory work, to promote supervisees' knowledge of how to get the most out of their supervision sessions. On the other hand, supervisors may want to pay attention to the

descriptions of challenging supervisees and develop strategies to handle these situations. In these cases, gatekeeping and related interventions may be necessary for supervisors to consider and practice (Nelson, Oliver, Reeve, & McNichols, 2010). Moreover, regardless when working with easy and challenging supervisees, supervisors' reflections on their own contributions to the supervisory situations is a crucial area for developing awareness, including when to pursue consultation and/or supervision for themselves. Thus, supervisor training programs could promote self-reflective practice by involving and highlighting these descriptions and categories in their curricula.

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Gatekeeping Practices of Counselor Educators in Master's Level Counseling Program

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Counseling students often present with problems of professional competence (PPC) in counselor education programs. The purpose of this study is to determine differences in the gatekeeping practices of counselor educators with students identified with PPC in CACREP-accredited and non-CACREP accredited counselor education programs in the United States. A survey instrument with scenarios related to students presenting with PPC was given to counselor educators. Results found no significant differences in gatekeeping practices between CACREP-accredited and non-CACREP accredited programs.

Keywords: gatekeeping, remediation, problems of professional competence, impairment, gatekeeper, counselor educator, counseling

Unethical behaviors, grievances, and lawsuits surrounding mental health counselors and counselor education programs in the United States have gained national media attention in the past decade. As early as 1991, the American Counseling Association (ACA) created a taskforce on Impaired Counselors to gain better understanding of and find a solution to this national issue (ACA, 1991). Surveys given to counselors by the taskforce indicated that at least 10% of counselors have a problem of professional competence (PPC) at any given time, which amounts to approximately 6,000 counseling professionals behaving unethically or potentially causing harm to clients in the community. In 2004, the ACA taskforce surveyed 770 licensed counselors and found that 63.5% of those counselors knew of a counselor who they believed had PPC. Of those surveyed, 75.7% indicated that counselors who present with PPC pose a risk to the counseling profession (American Counseling Association, 2015).

Before counselors are able to practice in the community, they must first graduate from a counseling related program. Empirical research on students presenting with PPC in counseling

related programs gained momentum in the mid 1970s (Bernard, 1975). Decades of research on this topic suggests that students presenting with these problems can potentially endanger and harm counselor educators, other students, counseling programs, as well as clients in the community (Bemak, Epp, & Keys, 1999; Bodner, 2012; Brear, Dorrian, & Luscri, 2008; Dugger & Francis, 2014; Frame & Stevens-Smith, 1995; McAdams, Foster, & Ward, 2007; Rosenberg, Getzelman, Arcinue, & Oren, 2005). Lamb et al. (1987) provided a comprehensive definition of PPC, defining the term as difficulty in professional functioning in one or more of the following ways:

- (a) an inability and/or unwillingness to acquire and integrate professional standards into one's repertoire of professional behavior; (b) an inability to acquire professional skills to reach an acceptable level of competency; (c) or an inability to control personal stress, psychological dysfunction and/or excessive emotional reactions that interfere with professional functioning (p. 598).

These professional functioning problems vary widely and can include a range of concerns and identified problems during counselor-training including poor/insufficient interpersonal and clinical skills, unethical or questionable behaviors, mental health concerns, and poor academic performance (Bogo et al., 2006; Brown-Rice & Furr, 2013; Busseri, Tyler, & King, 2005; Henderson & Dufrene, 2012; Lamb, Cochran, & Jackson, 1991; Lamb et al., 1987; Li, Lampe, Tursty, & Lin, 2009; Rosenberg et al., 2005; Russell & Peterson, 2003; Shen-Miller et al., 2011).

Although students must do their part to uphold ethical standards, counselor educators are ultimately responsible for students and their professional ethics. Counseling ethical and accreditation standards mandate counselor educators to act as gatekeepers for the counseling profession and to remediate students who may present with PPC during their training (ACA,

2014; CACREP, 2009). The American Counseling Association (ACA) *Code of Ethics* (2014) defines gatekeeping as “the initial and ongoing academic, skill, and dispositional assessment of students’ competency for professional practice, including remediation and termination as appropriate” (p. 20). The process of gatekeeping is multifaceted and contains numerous phases and assessments that must be done by counselor educators in order to safeguard the counseling profession.

Research suggests that students presenting with PPC have a wide-ranging impact on counselor education programs, with 95% of student peers being personally effected by a trainee identified with problems of professional competence (TIPPC) in their counseling program (Rosenberg et al., 2005). With more research emerging on this topic, counselor educators are becoming more aware of the serious harm caused by TIPPC in counselor training programs (McCaughan & Hill, 2015). Counselor educators and counseling students involved in TIPPC lawsuits in the past decade reported experiencing immense emotional and financial tolls during and after the lawsuit, which may have been prevented by a better understanding of gatekeeping roles and more comprehensive gatekeeping policies (Dugger & Francis, 2014; McAdams et al., 2007). The function of gatekeeping is important for the wellbeing of not only students and counselor educators, but for other counseling professionals, clients, and the community at large (Bodner, 2012; Brear et al., 2008). Bemak et al. (1999) suggested that TIPPC have a high potential to inflict emotional harm on clients and may incorporate personal agendas during counseling sessions by engaging in religious teachings, harmful therapy techniques, or opposition to multiculturalism and diverse clients who present with different gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation than the counselor-in-training. Due to the high potential for client harm,

counselor educators should be greatly concerned about TIPPC and upholding their gatekeeping responsibilities.

The importance of gatekeeping and remediation is highlighted in several areas of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standards (2009). Since its commencement in 1981, CACREP has been the principal accrediting body for the counseling profession (Even & Robinson, 2013). Research on the value and benefits of CACREP accreditation and the CACREP standards to students, counselor educators, and counseling programs as a whole has been conducted since the 1980s. Some benefits include students scoring better on the National Counseling Examination and committing less ethical misconduct than students in non-CACREP accredited programs (Adams, 2006; Milsom & Akos, 2007). Other benefits include contributing to stronger professional identity for students and graduates as well as faculty pride in and satisfaction within the program (Cato, 2009; Cecil et al., 1987). Although research suggests some concrete and essential benefits of CACREP accreditation, numerous studies have also identified limitations and liabilities that may be presented with accreditation, including an immense commitment of time and resources that some programs are unable to sustain (Bahen & Miller, 1998; Bobby & Kandor, 1992; Cato, 2009; Kandor & Bobby, 1991; Lanning, 1988; Lloyd, 1992; Thomas, 1991; Weinrach, 1991).

While counselor educators are mandated by the ACA *Code of Ethics* (2014) and the CACREP Standards (2009) to uphold their gatekeeping duties, no standard manual or guideline exists of specific gatekeeping practices counselor educators should use when dealing with a TIPPC. Research over the past few decades suggests a variety of remediation interventions that counselor educators can use at their discretion. Common remediation interventions found in current and past literature includes referral for personal counseling, increase or change in

supervision, discuss concern with student and/or faculty, repeating specific coursework, tutoring, increase informal communication, assign a peer mentor/co-therapist, increase observation during clinical sessions, reduce student's case load, assign extra readings/assignments, recommend workshops, write a letter of concern, written remediation plan, recommend a leave of absence, counsel student out of the program, probation, and dismissal (Homrich, 2009; Kaczmarek & Connor, 1998; Kress & Protivnak, 2009; Lamb et al., 1991; Lamb et al., 1987; Olkin & Gaughen, 1991; Procidano, Busch-Rossnagel, Reznikoff, & Geisinger, 1995; Russell et al., 2007; Russell & Peterson, 2003; Vacha-Haase et al., 2004; Vacha-Haase, 1995; Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010). Russell, DuPree, Beggs, Peterson, and Anderson (2007) proposed 17 specific remediation activities to be used with TIPPC in marriage and family therapy programs, ranging from least punitive to most punitive. The authors mentioned above created one of the first instruments that measures counselor educator's gatekeeping practices with TIPPC.

Since there is currently limited research in the area of successful remediation interventions, more empirical research on identifying and evaluating remedial interventions among counselor education programs is needed (Dufrene & Henderson, 2009; Forrest, Elman, Gizara, & Vacha-Haase, 1999; Henderson, 2010). Specifically, guidance in how to define, assess, and manage PPC among counselors-in-training is lacking (Kaslow et al., 2007). These studies suggest a need for further research in gatekeeping and remediation to move toward finding and implementing successful remediation interventions for TIPPC. The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a difference in the gatekeeping practices of counselor educators with TIPPC in CACREP-accredited and non-CACREP accredited counselor education programs in the United States. Two research questions were proposed for this study: 1) What are the differences in gatekeeping practices of counselor educators in master's level counseling

programs? 2) What have counselor educators identified as successful remediation interventions utilized with TIPPC in master's level counseling programs?

Method

Participants and Procedure

The targeted population for this study consisted of counselor educators at CACREP-accredited and non-CACREP accredited counseling programs throughout the United States. Ninety-nine counselor educators who were employed part time or full time in counseling education programs across the United States participated in this research study. A total of 60 participants identified teaching in counseling programs that were CACREP-accredited, while 39 participants identified teaching in programs that were not accredited by CACREP.

A majority of the research participants were female (68.7%; $n = 68$) Caucasian (76.8%; $n = 77$), ACA members (74.7%; $n = 74$), with counselor education and supervision doctoral degrees (62.6%; $n = 63$) from CACREP-accredited programs (52.5%; $n = 52$). Participants were also experienced in remediating, with approximately 88% ($n = 88$) of counselor educators being involved in a student remediation at least twice in their career. The majority of participants (66.7%; $n = 66$) who had been involved in a student remediation reported having two or more roles in the remediation process, such as being the faculty advisor, instructor, and/or supervisor of the student. Almost all respondents 98% ($n = 97$) denied ever being remediated themselves. Counselor educators from different regions in the United States were represented in this survey. Approximately 30% ($n = 30$) of programs were located in the Southern United States, 27.3% ($n = 27$) were located in the Northeast, 23.2% ($n = 23$) were located in the Midwest, and 17.2% ($n = 17$) of programs were located in the Western United States.

Most of the research participants in this study were experienced or seasoned counselor educators. Thirty-five percent ($n = 35$) of participants identified their type of faculty position as tenured faculty member, 27.3% ($n = 27$) identified their rank as non-tenured faculty members, 19.2% ($n = 19$) identified themselves as department chairs, and 15.2% ($n = 15$) of participants identified their position as non-tenure track faculty members. Approximately 44% ($n = 44$) of participants reported teaching between 2 and 10 years. Seventeen percent ($n = 17$) of participants reported teaching for 20 or more years, 14.1% ($n = 14$) taught between 11 and 15 years, 13.1% ($n = 13$) taught one year or less, and 11.1% ($n = 11$) reported teaching between 16 and 20 years. Twenty-nine percent ($n = 29$) of the participants identified being between 46 to 55 years of age, 28.3% ($n = 28$) were between 36 to 45 years of age, 25.3% ($n = 25$) were between 56 to 65 years of age, 9.1% ($n = 9$) were between 66 years or older, and 8.1% ($n = 8$) of participants were under 35 years of age.

The research design for this study was a quasi-experimental design comparing two different groups on multiple variables. The independent variables included CACREP accredited master's level counselor educators and non-CACREP accredited master's level counselor educators. The dependent variables in this study included gatekeeping practices of counselor educators. Specifically, gatekeeping practices included 17 specific remediation interventions implemented by counselor educators, such as writing a letter of concern or referring the student for personal counseling. These 17 remediation interventions were aggregated into 6 gatekeeping variables; talk, referral, start due process, increase interaction, mutual gatekeeping, and unilateral gatekeeping (see Table 1).

Table 1

Remediation Interventions into Aggregated Variables

Variable	<i>N</i>
Talk	Have a conversation with student Discuss with faculty
Referral	Referral for assessment Referral for counseling
Start Due Process	Letter of concern Professional development plan Increase supervision Repeat coursework
Increase Interaction	Increase informal communication Assign peer mentor Assign co-counselor Observe student more during sessions
Mutual Gatekeeping	Leave of absence Counsel out of program Probation
Unilateral Gatekeeping	Dismissal File ethics complaint

With approval from the institutional review board (IRB), data collection began and the instrument was distributed to research participants between the months of January 2015 and March 2015. Participants were recruited from both CACREP-accredited and non-CACREP accredited master's level counseling programs across the United States. Participants recruited received an introductory email with important information about the study. Data for this study was collected via two methods. For the first data collection method, a list of the e-mail addresses of department chairs from each of the 621 CACREP-accredited master's level counseling related programs was gathered from an on-line directory listed on the official CACREP website. A list of names and contact information of department chairs from non-CACREP accredited master's level counseling programs identified by Schweiger, Henderson, McCaskill, and Clawson (2012)

was also gathered. A personalized email was sent to counselor education department program chairs from both identified CACREP-accredited and non-CACREP accredited programs.

For the second data collection method, two email listservs were utilized; the Counselor Education and Supervision Network Listserv (CESNET-L) and the New Faculty Interest Network Listserv (NFIN). In order to increase participation, a modified Dillman approach (Dillman, 2001) was used by utilizing follow up emails. Three weeks after the initial introductory email was sent to both department chairs and the listserv, a second reminder email was sent. Two weeks after the second reminder email, a final email requesting participation was sent to department chairs as well as the listserv.

Instrument

The survey instrument utilized in this research study contained three sections. The first section was the demographics section, containing questions about the participant and the institution they currently teach in. The second section was a modified version of the instrument created by Russell et al. (2007) that consisted of seven vignettes presented in short paragraph forms that highlight scenarios associated with TIPPC (see Table 2). The seven vignettes were created based on topics related to PPC in master's level counselor training programs, including boundary violations, dual relationships, breach in confidentiality, lack of maintenance of progress notes, dishonesty, mental health issues, and lack of clinical skills competency. After reading each vignette, participants rated how likely they were to choose each of the 17 remediation interventions for each vignette on a 5-point Likert scale. On the Likert scale, the number 1 described the least likely remediation intervention appropriate for the vignette, while the number 5 described the most likely intervention. All seven vignettes sought to provide participants with realistic scenarios that include TIPPC in counselor education programs. The

third and final section of the survey instrument contained one question about successful remediation interventions used with TIPPC and one question asking if the participant's institution would agree with their remediation intervention choices.

Table 2

Vignette #2: Mental Health Issues

A student in your internship class who has demonstrated excellent clinical skills in the past has recently changed in appearance and behavior, become withdrawn, irritable, and less careful about personal hygiene. Though the student continues to meet with his clients regularly, he has been canceling supervision sessions and missing classes. You contact the student and express concern about his absences and behavior change. He discloses to you that he had been treated for bipolar disorder but is not currently on medication.

Results

In order to test the two hypotheses presented in this study and answer the proposed research questions, one-way between-groups multivariate analyses of variances (MANOVAS) were performed. The following six dependent variables were used in this analysis: talk, referral, start due process, increase interaction, mutual gatekeeping, and unilateral gatekeeping. The independent variables included counselor educators from CACREP and non-CACREP accredited master's level counseling programs. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Data Analysis System was used to analyze the data.

Table 3

Breakdown of Analysis for All Dependent Variables

Variable	<i>N</i>
Talk	$F(7, 91) = 1.45, p = .194$; Wilks' Lambda = .90; partial eta squared = .10
Referral	$F(7, 91) = 1.29, p = .262$; Wilks' Lambda = .91; partial eta squared = .09
Start Due Process	$F(7, 91) = .851, p = .548$; Wilks' Lambda = .94; partial eta squared = .06
Increase Interaction	$F(7, 91) = .743, p = .636$; Wilks' Lambda = .95; partial eta squared = .05
Mutual Gatekeeping	$F(7, 91) = 1.12, p = .355$; Wilks' Lambda = .92; partial eta squared = .08
Unilateral Gatekeeping	$F(7, 91) = .692, p = .678$; Wilks' Lambda = .95; partial eta squared = .05

When comparing mean differences between the two groups, results revealed no significant differences among the two groups across the dependent variables. When considering all seven vignettes related to TIPPC, there were also no statistically significant differences found between the accreditation of counselor education programs on the combined dependent variables (see Figures 1-6). This data analysis represented section II of the survey instrument. When looking at section III of the instrument, successful remediation interventions identified by counselor educators, similar results were found. No statistically significant difference was found between the accreditation of counselor education programs on the combined dependent variables.

Figure 1. Between-Group and Within-Subjects Differences for Talk Variable

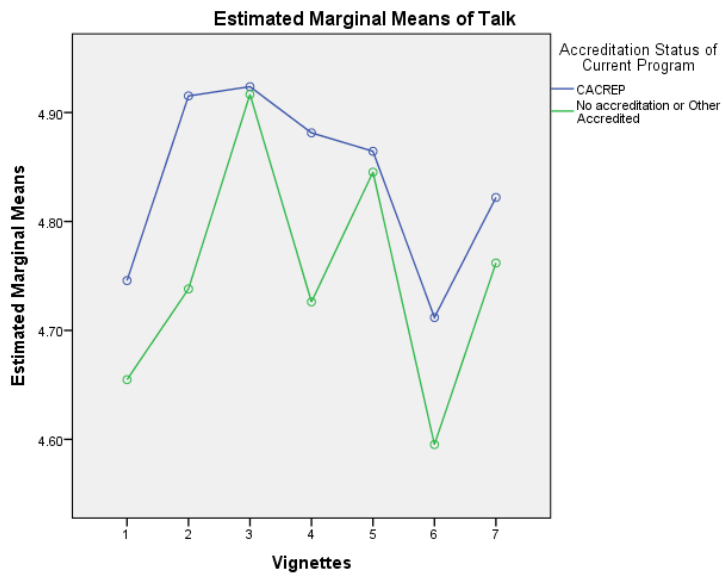


Figure 2. Between-Group and Within-Subjects Differences for Referral Variable

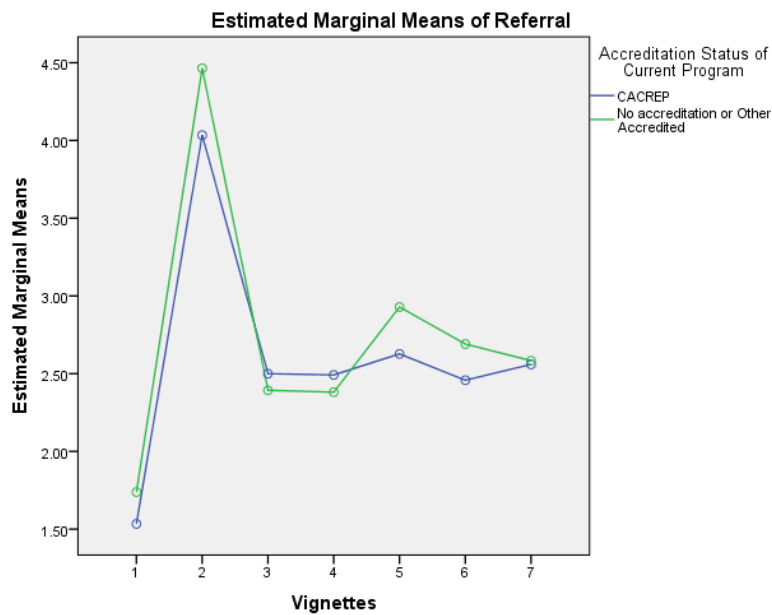


Figure 3. Between-Group and Within-Subjects Differences for Start Due Process Variable

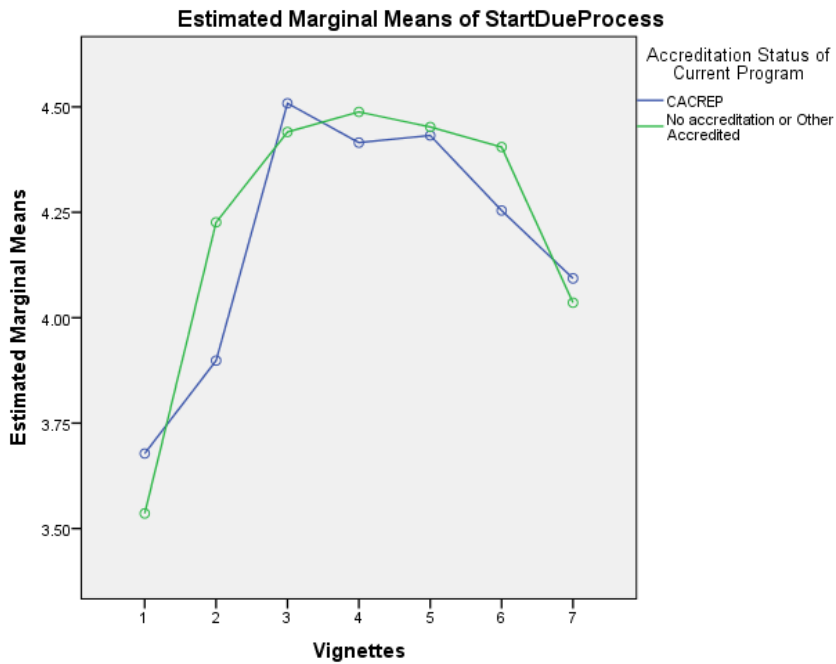


Figure 4. Between-Group and Within-Subjects Differences for Increase Interaction Variable

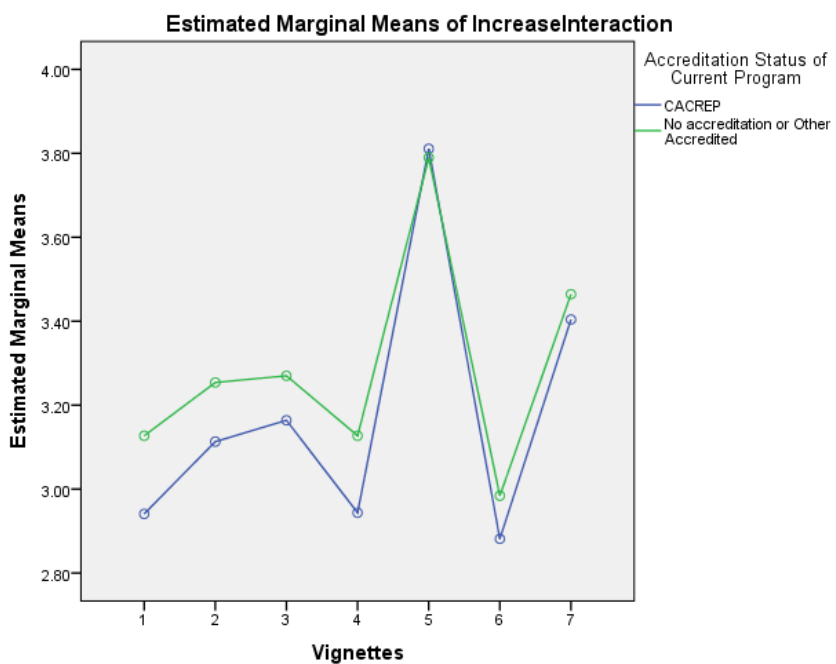


Figure 5. Between-Group and Within-Subjects Differences for Mutual Variable

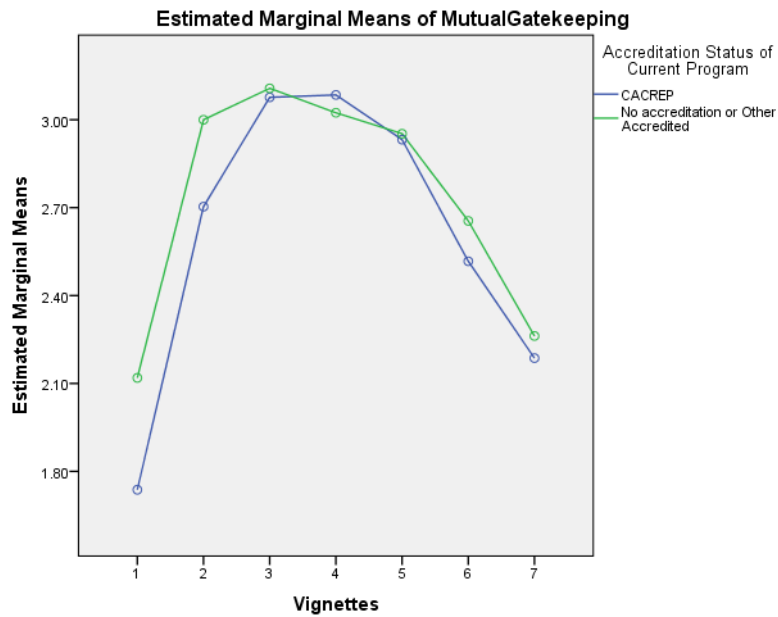
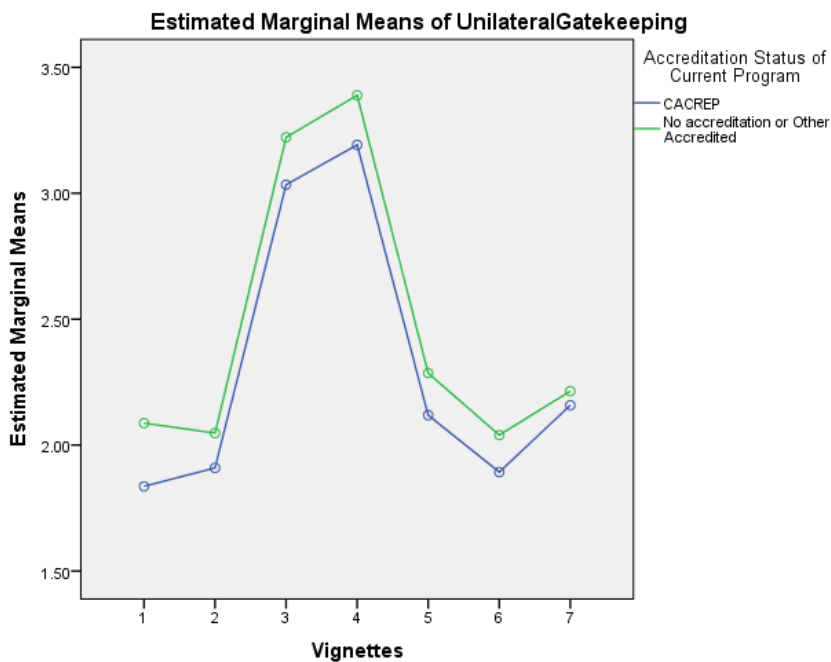


Figure 6. Between-Group and Within-Subjects Differences for Unilateral Variable



Counselor educators from both CACREP-accredited and non-CACREP accredited programs chose very similar gatekeeping practices when faced with different types of PPC. A within subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to compare participant scores for all seven vignettes combined (i.e. confidentiality, mental health, dishonesty, dual relationships, clinical skills, progress notes, boundaries). When presented with all seven scenarios, counselor educators chose talking ($\bar{x} = 4.80$, $SD = .273$) and starting due process ($\bar{x} = 4.21$, $SD = .587$) as essential gatekeeping practices. Talking included speaking with the student or other faculty members about the presenting issues, while starting due process included writing a letter of concern and/or a written professional development plan. Counselor educators from both groups were hesitant to choose gatekeeping practices that may have appeared more severe or punitive such as referral to a counselor or psychiatrist ($\bar{x} = 2.65$, $SD = .690$), as well as mutual gatekeeping ($\bar{x} = 2.65$, $SD = .637$) and unilateral gatekeeping practices ($\bar{x} = 2.38$, $SD = .610$), which included remediation interventions such as counseling the student out of the program, recommending a leave of absence, probation, and/or dismissal from the program.

Discussion

The purpose of this research study was to determine any potential differences in counselor educator's gatekeeping practices with TIPPC in CACREP-accredited and non-CACREP accredited counselor education programs in the United States. The following two research questions were answered: 1) What are the differences in gatekeeping practices of counselor educators in master's level counseling programs? 2) What have counselor educators identified as successful remediation interventions utilized with TIPPC in master's level counseling programs? A survey instrument was used to measure gatekeeping practices across different scenarios counselor educators may encounter with TIPPC. Results from the survey

revealed no significant differences among the two groups, suggesting that counselor educators from CACREP-accredited and non-CACREP accredited programs remediate TIPPC similarly.

Implications for Counselor Education and Supervision

Findings from this study can be of significant value to counselor educators, counseling students, and counseling education programs across the United States. No significant differences were found in the gatekeeping practices of counselor educators in CACREP-accredited and non-CACREP accredited counseling programs. An explanation for this lack of differences among the two groups could be due to the similarities among participants, including level of experience in the field of counselor education and adherence to the ACA Code of Ethics.

Level of Experience

Demographical information collected from the survey revealed that a large percentage of participants in this study were experienced or seasoned department chairs or tenured faculty members, between the ages of 36 and 65, with more than six years of experience as counselor educators. Participants also had a great deal of experience being involved in student remediations, taking on several roles in the remediation process. This higher level of experience in the field and with remediation was a commonality among both groups, which could be an explanation for the lack of differences found related to gatekeeping practices.

Adherence to the ACA Code of Ethics

Demographical data also revealed that nearly three quarters of participants were members of ACA. This commonality among research participants is critical due to counselors being ethically bound by the ACA Code of Ethics. This shared ethical allegiance may be a key reason for the lack of differences found among groups in the area of remediation interventions. If all participants adhered to the ACA Code of Ethics when presented with ethical dilemmas among

TIPPC, it is reasonable to determine that their surveys answers would be similar across groups. If this is the case, it could be presumed that counselor educators in CACREP-accredited and non-CACREP accredited counseling programs remediate students similarly due to their strong counselor identity and devotion to their ethical code.

Limitations

This study contained four main limitations. In quasi-experimental research, internal validity is often compromised due to the lack of random sampling (Clark-Carter, 2004). This study utilized purposive and homogenous sampling in order to generalize the results to the specific population of counselor educators. Therefore, this study may lack internal validity. The next limitation pertains to volunteer-bias (Belson, 1986), as all respondents for this study volunteered their time. Volunteers may have answered the survey questions differently than those members of the population who did not agree to participate, posing a potential limitation to the generalizability of results to all counselor educators. The third limitation relates to the small number of counselor educators in the comparison group. There may not have been enough participants in the comparison group to pick up on potential differences in the study. The final limitation is in regards to the survey instrument used. The survey utilized in this study has only been used in one other research study and has not been extensively examined for validity and reliability. The lack of psychometric properties pertaining to this survey could affect the reliability and validity of the results. Social desirability bias did not appear to be a limitation in this study, as participant's score appeared to coincide with the type of remediation intervention and scenario presented.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research study has offered contributions and implications for professionals in the counseling education and supervision field. As a result of these findings, some important considerations for future research have emerged. This study found that there were no significant differences among gatekeeping practices of counselor educators in CACREP-accredited and non-CACREP accredited counseling education programs across the United States. Results also suggested relationships among identification of effective gatekeeping strategies and level of experience in the field of counselor education. Additionally, results suggested that counselor educators are more likely to recommend remediation interventions pertaining to talk and start due process, over interventions pertaining to referring students, increasing interaction, and mutual and unilateral gatekeeping. Although these findings are important and significant, future research is needed to build on the conclusions of this study.

A majority of the participants in this study were experienced counselor educators who were also members of ACA, suggesting that participants had strong counselor identities and were ethically bound by the ACA Code of Ethics. Thus, the first recommendation for future research is to conduct research with novice counselor educators, with little experience remediating students, and identify any differences there may be in their gatekeeping practices compared to more experienced counselor educators. Future research could also focus on differences between novice counselors in CACREP-accredited and non-CACREP accredited groups, to determine if the results would parallel results found in this current study.

The next research consideration is related to the survey instrument utilized in this study. There are currently no known standardized survey instruments that measure counselor educator's gatekeeping practices with TIPPC. The survey instrument utilized in this study was a revised

version of the instrument used in the Russell et al. (2007) study with marriage and family therapy programs. This instrument has only been used in a total of two research studies, and has no psychometric properties. Consideration should be given in revising the instrument to improve its validity as well as test-retest reliability. Future researchers can also conduct pre-test and post-test studies to further validate the instrument.

Future researchers who would like to utilize the instrument used in this study would benefit from revising the instrument based on participant feedback. Some participants noted that they would answer the survey questions differently based on the student's past behaviors as well as how the student responded to initial interventions. Providing participants with more detailed information about the student in the vignettes would be beneficial. This survey had a 5-point Likert scale, with one being strongly disagree and five being strongly agree. Future researchers can modify the survey and allow participants to choose which remediation intervention they would choose first, second, third, etc. This would allow for a more clear and valid interpretation of the results.

Importance of the Results

Counselor educators and supervisors from different types of counseling programs may find value in the knowledge of experienced counselor educator's choice in effective and successful remediation interventions when working with TIPPC. These results can also help counselor educators and supervisors identify more objective remediation interventions, such as the ones outlined in the survey instrument, to help them feel less ambivalent and uncertain about their gatekeeping responsibilities. Increased certainty and confidence about the gatekeeping role could lead to more successful student remediations. Students may also benefit from results found in this study. Since counseling students can be sensitive to critical feedback from a supervisor or

professor, early and frequent discussions of remediation interventions provided by program leaders may allow students to become less defensive and more open to self-analysis and reflection throughout their program of study. Also, students can gain more knowledge of counselor educators' gatekeeping responsibilities. The knowledge of the different types of remediation interventions could lead to more successful student remediations in the future.

Lastly, counseling education programs across the United States could also benefit from the findings in this study. Literature suggests that counselor educators receive minimal training on how to appropriately deal with TIPPC. Research also suggests that many counselor educators feel ambivalent and reluctant about participating in their gatekeeping responsibilities (Barlow & Coleman, 2003; Bradey & Post, 1991; Gaubatz & Vera, 2002; Gizara & Forrest, 2004; Grady, 2009; Kerl & Eichler, 2005; Koerin & Miller, 1995; Samec, 1995; Sowbel, 2012; Tam & Kwok, 2007). Since counselor educators are ethically bound to act as gatekeepers for the profession, more training is needed in the area of gatekeeping and remediation with TIPPC. Results from this study can contribute to the understanding and creation or revisions of policies and procedures regarding student remediations, which could reduce the possibility of litigation, which can be a difficult and taxing process. Additionally, better understanding and confidence in how counselor educators carry out their gatekeeping responsibilities with TIPPC could assist in more successful remediations, reducing potential harm to counselor educators, counseling students, counseling programs, and the community at large.

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A Survey of Students' Knowledge about Child Sexual Abuse and Perceived Readiness to Provide Counseling Services

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Jennifer Marie Foster

Master's level students in counselor education and counseling psychology (N = 304) were surveyed to explore their knowledge about child sexual abuse (CSA) and perceived readiness to provide related counseling services. While students demonstrated general knowledge about sexual abuse, preparedness to counsel was rated much lower with 69% of students indicating low levels of competency. Data was analyzed to explore demographic characteristics that led to increased readiness scores. Indicators of statistically significant higher readiness scores included: prior work or volunteer experience with victims of sexual abuse, participation in CSA trainings, and supervised field experience. Implications for student training and recommendations for counselor preparation programs are delineated.

Keywords: sexual abuse, training, preparation, counseling, supervision, competency

It is estimated that a large number of children (1:4 girls, 1:6 boys) will be sexually abused before reaching adulthood (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2005; National Association of Adult Survivors of Child Abuse, 2015). In meta-analysis of 65 studies on child sexual abuse (CSA) in 22 countries, 7.9% of men and 19.7% of women acknowledged a sexual abuse history. The researchers concluded that CSA was much more prevalent globally than previously thought (Pereda, Guilera, Forns, & Gómez-Benito, 2009).

Since sexual abuse often goes unreported, and many children do not disclose their experiences, the rates of CSA may be much higher than statistics indicate (Green, 2008).

Following sexual abuse, approximately one-third of children appear asymptomatic; whereas, around half exhibit severe symptoms (Adler-Nevo & Manassis, 2005). Problems can occur in multiple domains (e.g., social, cognitive, academic, physical, spiritual, and emotional)

(Goldfinch, 2009; Tomlinson, 2008), and children in treatment for CSA are frequently diagnosed with one or more mental health disorders (Briere & Lanktree, 2008). Despite immediate and future negative consequences of CSA, early intervention often results in successful outcomes (Green, 2008).

For adults with *unresolved* trauma, the effects of CSA are long reaching. Many survivors experience intrapersonal and interpersonal difficulties that negatively impact their general health and wellbeing (Parker, Fourt, Langmuir, Dalton, & Classen, 2007). These challenges may lead survivors to seek counseling. According to a meta-analysis of 40 studies, an average of 50% of women and 28% of men who enter counseling have a CSA history (Read, Goodman, Morrison, Ross, & Aderhold, 2004). For some clients, their counselor is the first person to whom they disclose their abuse. With numerous clients sexually abused as children, it would seem imperative that counselors are ready to assist, yet this is not the case.

The majority of practicing clinicians, including school counselors, psychologists, social workers, mental health counselors, and nurses, report that they had little to no training in the area of child sexual abuse and were unprepared to address the needs of CSA victims (Day, Thurlow, & Woolliscroft, 2003; Goldman & Padayachi, 2005; Lokeman, 2011; Winkelspecht & Singg, 1998). In one study, 81% of counselors said they were under-equipped, uncomfortable, and not very competent to provide services to CSA survivors (Day et al., 2003). School counselors in another study struggled to identify warning signs of CSA, lacked counseling skills for working with victims, and under-reported concerns of possible CSA, despite their role as mandated reporters (Goldman & Padayachi, 2005). Hinkelman and Bruno (2008) assert that addressing CSA requires a special skillset that many school counselors do not possess because their training programs failed to equip them. Yet, there is a discrepancy

between the number of programs that reported preparing their students to work with clients who have experienced trauma (69%), and students from those same institutions that reported receiving training (31%) (Lokeman, 2011).

Similar to teachers-in-training, students in the helping fields will interact with children during internship experiences, and must be prepared to recognize signs of abuse, properly handle a disclosure, report suspected abuse, and provide treatment or referrals (McKee & Dillenburg, 2009). Thus preparation in the area of CSA must start in the classroom, and then be continued while under supervision in the field. With professional counselors reporting lack of training, one must look to students-in-training programs to investigate the extent and quality of preparation that they are receiving to work with this population. This study utilized survey research to investigate students' knowledge of sexual abuse and explored their level of preparedness for providing counseling services to child victims, adult survivors, and nonoffending parents or caregivers of child victims. The results indicated there is a vital need for specialized preparation in CSA in training programs.

Rationale for CSA Training

Given the statistical likelihood of working with survivors of CSA, future helpers need to be well prepared. Lack of preparation has the potential for negative outcomes for both counselors (e.g., burnout, compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma, feeling incompetent, unethical behavior) and clients (improper referral, inadequate treatment, further silencing) (Adams & Riggs, 2008; Cavanagh, Read, & New, 2004; Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995; Read, Hammersley, & Rudegeair, 2007). While lack of preparation results in negative outcomes, proper training can equip future counselors to identify abuse and initiate treatment. Specific areas for CSA training include: (a) inquiring about abuse, (b) exploring details of the trauma,

(c) conveying empathy, (d) implementing evidence-based approaches, (e) self-care, and (f) supervision (Foster, 2011). Each of these components is discussed briefly below.

First, proper training prepares students to ask clients about abuse history and respond in a supportive manner. Although clients may have already completed an intake, it is also important for counselors-in-training to ask about abuse directly. Many clients skip this portion of an intake, answer falsely to avoid the topic or because they believe it is not relevant to their current issue, or answer “no” because they do not define their experience as abusive or out of fear that they will be accused of abusing their own children (SAMHSA, 2000). Students must learn how to communicate that CSA can be discussed openly in the safety of the therapeutic relationship.

Along with asking about a CSA history, counselors-in-training need to be ready to openly explore the abuse. Counselors may be hesitant to do this out of fear that they will retraumatize their clients (Cavanagh et al., 2004). Others may unconsciously shift focus away due to inability to hear details of the trauma or counter-transference (Ventura, 2010). This avoidance communicates that abuse experiences must be kept silent (Crenshaw & Hardy, 2007). Exploring details of another’s trauma is challenging and makes counselors aware of their vulnerability to pain, violence, and mortality. Thus training is essential to increase ability to explore trauma histories, including the often painful and frightening details (Foster & Hagedorn, 2014a).

Ability to convey empathy is another essential component of training. While listening to the details of the abuse, unprepared counselors may unknowingly withdraw empathy and distance themselves from clients as a form of self-protection (McGregor, Thomas, & Read, 2006). Emotional distance may hinder clients' progress and communicate that the sexual

abuse is something to be ashamed of (Pistorius, Feinauer, Harper, Stahmann, & Miller, 2008). Victims are highly perceptive to their counselors' readiness to hear about abuse and are unlikely to share if they believe the counselor is unavailable (Jones & Morris, 2007). Counselors have an opportunity to offer hope and understanding through conveying empathy (Jenmorri, 2006).

In addition to the ability to convey empathy, students must be knowledgeable about CSA treatment and able to implement evidenced-based approaches. Effective methods have been established for CSA victims. For example, Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) effectively reduces anxiety, depression, and trauma related symptoms (Cohen, Mannarino, Berliner, & Deblinger, 2000; Cohen, Mannarino, & Deblinger, 2006). In a meta-analysis of 21 randomized controlled studies of trauma treatments, TF-CBT was the only approach to meet the "well-established criteria for children and adolescents exposed to trauma because the treatment was found to be statistically significantly superior to psychosocial placebo or to other treatment" (Silverman et al., 2008, p. 160). Lack of awareness of and training with approaches such as TF-CBT may result in inappropriate referrals or failure to provide adequate treatment. When counselors are knowledgeable about CSA treatment, they can communicate to their client the benefits of counseling and instill hope (Foster, 2011).

Another key part of student training is to discuss the necessity of self-care. Unfortunately, many counselors receive minimal self-care training (Culver, 2011). This is especially problematic for helpers who assist trauma victims as they are at a greater risk for burnout, compassion fatigue or secondary traumatic stress (also referred to as vicarious traumatization) (Craig & Sprang, 2010; Culver, 2011; Jenmorri, 2006; Sommer, 2008;

Stewart-Spencer, 2009; Trippany, White-Kress, Wilcoxon, 2004). In order to maintain effectiveness, helpers must engage in activities to decrease these risks such as developing a wellness plan. Proper education about compassion fatigue can increase students' readiness to work effectively with CSA victims.

Finally, supervision is an essential element to trauma work for beginning helpers (Foster, 2011; Sommer, 2008). Novice counselors often experience a variety of challenges, including questioning their own worldview and previously held assumptions about CSA (Eave, 2011). Supervisors with expertise in the area of trauma guide inexperienced counselors as they explore the personal impact of working with survivors. Supervisors model special skills and help supervisees navigate challenges that arise. Supervisors also watch for signs of vicarious traumatization (Sommer, 2008). For specific guidelines for CSA supervision see Pearlman and Saakytne (1995), Etherington (2000), and Maidenberg (2004). In sum, there are multiple areas that students need specific training: inquiring about abuse history, exploring the trauma, demonstrating empathy, implementing effective approaches, engaging in self-care, and learning through supervision.

Current Counseling Standards for Training

Despite the increasing awareness of the need to train students to address trauma, current accreditation standards set forth by the American Counseling Association (ACA) and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (CACREP) do not require training programs to offer a course or other form of intensive training specific to sexual abuse (ACA, 2015; CACREP, 2009). The 2009 CACREP Standards do stipulate that all counselors understand the "effects of crises, disasters, and other trauma-causing events on person of all ages" (CACREP, 2009, p. 10). Child sexual abuse is one type of trauma that counselors must

be prepared to address, but the standards are silent on the specific requirements of training and how much time must be dedicated to each type of trauma.

Unfortunately, many counseling programs are not adequately preparing students. One study indicated that 79% of programs sampled did not require students to take a course in trauma (Stewart-Spencer, 2009). This sends a message to students that “trauma is not an important aspect of counselor education and is unnecessary training for the mental health profession” (Stewart-Spencer, p. 78). Trauma training may not be viewed as essential despite the high likelihood that students will work directly with individuals who have experienced trauma (Champion, Shipman, Bonner, Hensley, & Howe, 2003), and training programs may fail to provide preparation for vicarious traumatization unless they are mandated to do so (Sommer & Cox, 2005).

Rationale for Study

Although some research has examined the level of preparedness of practicing counselors in the field (Bryant, 2009; Day et al., 2003; Eave, 2011; Lokeman, 2011; O’Halloran & O’Halloran, 2001; Winkelspecht & Singg, 1998), students’ level of readiness for counseling victims and knowledge about sexual abuse is largely unknown. Only one qualitative study was found which involved semi-structured interviews with six counselors-in-training to examine perceptions on their education and confidence working with children who have experienced interpersonal trauma (Fitzgerald, 2013). The students in this study disclosed that they felt ill-prepared and lacked confidence with this specific population. Specifically, six themes emerged from the interviews, including: “(a) adverse emotional and physical reactions; (b) increased empathy for self and others; (c) changes in how counselors-in-training view their own families; (d) changes in professional expectations; (e) ways counselors-in-training cope;

and (f) training issues” (p. 86). To further explore this topic with a large sample of students, a survey was developed and administered to identify students’ current knowledge and perceived competence with regard to CSA counseling. The following questions guided the study:

Research Question 1: What do trainees know about CSA?

Research Question 2: To what degree do trainees feel prepared to provide counseling services to CSA child victims, nonoffending parents or caregivers, and adult survivors of CSA?

Research Question 3: What demographic factors increase trainees’ knowledge and perceived readiness to provide counseling for CSA?

Method

Participants

Following the university’s Human Subjects Institutional Review Board approval, master’s level counselor education and counseling psychology students were asked to respond to an anonymous paper and pencil survey. The survey was distributed during a single semester at a large CACREP-accredited university in a Midwestern state in the U.S.

Of the 482 students enrolled in courses (at the main campus and three regional campuses), 304 completed the survey yielding a 63% response rate. All 304 surveys were usable for data analysis; however, responses varied on some of the demographic items. The items with the lowest response rate were ethnicity, which was answered by 78% ($n = 238$) of the sample and gender, which was answered by 91% ($n = 278$) of the sample. This may be due to fear that students would be identified in a program that is predominately White and female.

Demographically, 69 % ($n = 209$) of the graduate students in the sample were women, 22% ($n = 68$) men, and 1 student identified as other. Whites comprised 61% ($n = 185$) of the respondents; the remaining respondents were Black (9%, $n = 26$), Hispanic (4%, $n = 12$),

multiracial (3%, $n = 10$), and Asian (2%, $n = 5$). Sixty percent ($n = 181$) of the respondents were age 20–29 years, 24% ($n = 72$) were 30–39, 9% ($n = 27$) were age 40–49, 6% ($n = 19$) were age 50–59, 1% ($n = 4$) were age 60 and older. Sixty-five percent of the students were in counselor education, and 35% counseling psychology. Among the counselor education specialties, mental health counseling was indicated as the field of study by 24% ($n = 74$) of the students, school counseling by 18% ($n = 54$), marriage and family by 13% ($n = 38$), college counseling by 6% ($n = 18$), rehabilitation counseling by 2% ($n = 6$), and dual enrolled by .3% ($n = 1$). Forty-five percent ($n = 137$) of the entire sample of students (counselor education and counseling psychology) indicated that they had completed 20 credit hours or less in the program, 32% ($n = 97$) had completed between 21 and 40 hours, 21% ($n = 64$) had previously completed 41–60 credit hours, and 2% ($n = 6$) had completed more than 60 credit hours. Thirteen percent ($n = 39$) of the respondents were enrolled in an onsite practicum, and 5% ($n = 14$) were enrolled in a field internship. The majority of the participants, 71% ($n = 217$), had no prior training in CSA. Further, 61% ($n = 184$) of the participants had no previous work or volunteer experiences with CSA victims. Finally, 17% ($n = 52$) of the sample disclosed a CSA history, and 52% ($n = 157$) of the sample indicated that a close friend or family member had been a victim of CSA.

Survey Instrument

A review of the empirical literature revealed that a survey related to students' CSA knowledge and perceived readiness did not exist. A brief 26-item survey was created by the author and an assistant who had clinical experience with victims of child sexual abuse. The survey was created based on review of current literature about CSA and treatment. Consensus was reached between the author and assistant about the inclusion of 26 items. Additionally,

the survey was reviewed by a content expert in the area of sexual abuse who was not associated with the study. The individual provided feedback on the questions and gave some suggestions for rewording several of the statements to enhance their clarity. The reviewer stated that the survey assessed key knowledge areas related to sexual abuse as well as competencies, which contributed to the face validity of the instrument.

The survey was organized into three sections. Section I consisted of demographic questions, which were used to answer Research Question 3. Section II addressed Research Question 1 and began with a definition of CSA from the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act, 2003 [42 U.S.C.A. §5106g(4)]:

- (a) The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct; or (b) the rape, and in cases of caretaker or interfamilial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children.

Students were then presented with 12 statements about CSA with “agree” or “disagree” as response options. For example, students were asked if they agreed or disagreed that: “Children who have been sexually abused usually tell someone as soon as it happens;” “Sexual abuse is frequently a one-time incident;” and “Children who are sexually abused may defend or feel positive toward the perpetrator.” Section III of the survey addressed Research Question 2 and was composed of 10 items that required students to respond to a 4-point Likert-scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Students were asked to assess their level of readiness to provide counseling-related services that were identified in the literature as the

most common, including readiness to (a) work with a child victim, (b) counsel an adult with CSA history, (c) identify signs and symptoms of sexual abuse, (d) make a mandated report, (e) provide evidence-based treatment interventions, (f) hear details of the abuse, (g) administer assessments related to the trauma, (h) ask questions about suspected abuse without leading, (i) include nonoffending parents/caregivers in treatment, and (j) teach children and adults about CSA prevention. Two items were worded negatively and reverse scored (e.g., I am unprepared to hear a client share details of his or her sexual abuse.).

At the end of the survey, students were asked if they would take a course about CSA as an elective, and if they thought that a course about CSA should be required. Students were then asked if they have personal history of CSA and if they have a close friend or family member with a CSA history. These questions were included because it is unknown if personal experience may impact students' knowledge about CSA and/or perceived readiness to counsel victims.

The researcher included counseling resources for students as part of the consent process since students may recall their own experiences or the experiences of others that have been abused. Although personal reflection and self-awareness are important characteristics of helpers, the process may be difficult for students who have an unresolved trauma history. Despite the potential for discomfort or recalling of CSA memories, the survey provided students an opportunity to reflect on their knowledge and counseling ability. Furthermore, the results inform the field on the CSA knowledge and perceived competence of students.

Results

Knowledge about Child Sexual Abuse

The first research question investigated students' knowledge about CSA by

presenting students with a variety of facts and myths about CSA derived from current literature. The following table lists the twelve areas and the percent of students who answered correctly.

Table 1

Trainee's Knowledge about Child Sexual Abuse

Knowledge Areas	% of Students Answering Correctly
Adult offenders are frequently family members or friends of family	99%
Children often feel guilty or to blame	98%
Immediate disclosure is not typical	97%
Sexual abuse is not often a one-time incident	96%
Physical evidence is not required for reporting suspected CSA	95%
Many victims never disclose their abuse	95%
Positive or protective feelings toward perpetrator are common	94%
Prevalence of CSA for girls	93%
False accusations are uncommon	93%
Child victims of CSA are more likely experience future victimization	87%
Frequency of sexual abuse perpetrated by offenders under 18	76%
Prevalence of CSA for boys	14%

Although the students demonstrated some general knowledge about CSA (see table above), there were some gaps in their understanding that could be addressed in CSA training and coursework. For example, 95% answered correctly regarding the necessity of physical evidence to make an abuse report, yet a small portion of students (5%; $n = 15$) thought this was required. This is an important error to correct as counselors are mandated reporters (not investigators) and must report any suspicion of abuse. It is also important for students-in-training to know that physical evidence in CSA cases is rare (Lewis & Klettke, 2012).

Only 87% ($n = 264$) students knew that CSA is a risk factor for future victimization

(e.g., domestic violence, sexual assault). Students need to know about future risks and assist clients (and nonoffending parents and caregivers) to enhance clients' future safety.

Furthermore, only 76% ($n = 231$) of students knew the frequency of CSA perpetrated by individuals under the age of 18. Students may view only adults as sexual offenders and may not know how to respond to allegations of child on child sexual abuse in terms of reporting and/or treatment. Child initiated sexual abuse accounts for approximately one-third of CSA cases (Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner, & Hamby, 2005; Kilpatrick et al., 2000). Students-in-training must be ready to address the unique issues that arise when a child perpetrates abuse.

Students scored lowest on a question about the prevalence of male sexual abuse with only 14% ($n = 42$) of students answering correctly. This stands in contrast to the 93% of students who knew the prevalence of CSA for girls. Students may be influenced by culture's portrayal of female victims. Additionally, research in the social sciences, is frequently limited to adult female survivors (Jones et al., 2013; McGregor et al., 2006). It is important for students to know the prevalence of CSA for boys and understand the additional stigma boys face by disclosing (Alaggia & Millington, 2008; Paine & Hansen, 2002).

In sum, the results indicate that students are knowledgeable about some of the basic facts of CSA, yet there are some gaps in their knowledge that could be addressed with proper training and coursework. Faculty members can help correct misinformation through psychoeducation.

Preparedness to Provide CSA Counseling and Related Services

The second research question investigated the degree that students think that they are prepared to provide counseling and related services to child victims, nonoffending

parents or caregivers, and adult survivors of CSA. The categories of agree and strongly agree were combined as were disagree and strongly disagree during data analysis to examine students who rated themselves as competent compared with those who felt unprepared. The following table presents those results in order of most prepared to least prepared.

The individual item results indicate that there are numerous areas in which students feel unprepared for CSA fieldwork.

Table 2

Trainees' Perceived Child Sexual Abuse Competency

Area of Competency	% of Students Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing
Listening to a client's CSA story	81%
Procedures for reporting CSA	71%
Asking questions when abuse is suspected without leading	52%
Providing counseling services to adults with a CSA history	41%
Identification of CSA (knowledge of risk factors and warning signs)	41%
Evaluation of trauma symptoms using assessments	30%
Including nonoffending parents/caregivers in counseling with child	28%
Providing counseling services to child victims	28%
Teaching CSA prevention	21%
Utilizing evidence-based interventions	18%

Next, the 10 questions were totaled for each student to create a competency score (strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, agree = 3, strongly agree = 4) with a possible score of 10 to 40 points. Lower scores indicated lower levels of competency. Total competency scores for the sample ranged from 10 to 39 ($M = 23.4$, $SD = 4.86$). Scores below 25 were considered low

competence ($n = 185$, 61%), 25 – 33 = moderate competence ($n = 116$, 38%), and 34 – 40 = high competence ($n = 3$, 1%).

Factors that Increase Student Knowledge and Perceived Readiness

Research Question 3 investigated the demographic factors that increased students' total perceived readiness to provide counseling for CSA. One-way ANOVAs were conducted for each demographic category for the dependent variable of total perceived competence. There were no significant relationships between the demographic variables of age, gender, and race and the preparedness to provide CSA counseling and related services. There were also no significant relationships between the degree program (counselor education or counseling psychology), specific counselor education track (marriage, couple and family, school, mental health, etc.), or personal history of CSA abuse and perceived readiness to counsel.

A significant difference in the total competency score was identified with three demographic factors: prior work or volunteer experience with CSA victims, participation in CSA trainings, and supervised field experience (e.g., onsite practicum and off campus internship). Individuals with prior work or volunteer experiences with victims of CSA reported significantly more readiness to provide services, $F(1, 295) = 60.57$, $p < .001$ ($r = .42$). Additionally, individuals who had engaged in CSA training had significantly higher perceived competency scores $F(1, 294) = 28.96$, $p < .001$ ($r = .42$). Moreover, students currently enrolled in practicum or internship had significantly higher preparedness scores, $F(1, 293) = 16.06$, $p < .001$ ($r = .31$).

Discussion

This study investigated students' knowledge about CSA and perceived preparedness for providing counseling services along with factors that led to higher readiness scores. The

survey highlighted several gaps in knowledge that need to be addressed through instruction, including: the increased risk for future victimization, the frequency of CSA perpetrated by offenders under the age of 18, and the prevalence of male sexual abuse. Additional training has numerous benefits. For example, survivors' higher risk for future victimization is important for helpers to know so that the safety of clients can be assessed. Knowledge about the frequency of male sexual abuse is also essential so that counselors can help reduce the stigma male victims experience and gain specific skills for counseling males. Additionally, understanding that CSA is frequently perpetrated by other children is important so counselors can provide services or referrals for all children involved. Families in which the abuse has occurred between siblings or relatives may need additional support (Foster, 2014).

Although 9 out of 12 the questions were answered correctly by at least 90% of students, there remains a small group of students with mistaken beliefs that need to be addressed. Unless corrected, students-in-training could potentially harm future clients as a result of these misconceptions (Adams & Riggs, 2008; Cavanagh et al., 2004; Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995; Read et al., 2007). For example, the belief that you cannot report suspected sexual abuse unless there is physical evidence could lead to a counselor failing to make a report, which could result in the child experiencing further abuse. In a study of school counselors' reporting behaviors, the author concluded that school counselors may suspect more abuse than they actually report (Bryant, 2009). Proper training and competency in reporting protocols is especially important for school counselors as they are often the most knowledgeable person regarding abuse and mandated reporting in their schools (Bryant, 2009).

Another potential area to address is the belief that *many* children lie about their abuse could lead to a counselor responding to a disclosure with skepticism or numerous questions,

which could make a victim feel interrogated or worse, disbelieved. Additionally, counselors who do not understand the potential for their client to have positive feelings (e.g., love, a desire to protect) toward perpetrators, may struggle to respond with empathy and understand how those feelings are valid. Faculty members can help raise awareness about CSA in their courses and correct misconceptions so that students enter the field well prepared.

Along with addressing students' knowledge, faculty members also need to consider students' self-assessment of their readiness to provide CSA services. The results of this survey indicated that the majority of students feel unprepared for most aspects of CSA work. Dillihunt's (1997) dissertation research reached the same conclusion about practicing clinicians stating that "... counselors related feeling 'low confidence' to 'somewhat confident' in their CSA treatment abilities and they perceived their school based CSA training to be 'inadequate' to 'somewhat adequate.'" (p. i). Dillihunt's recommendation was to increase knowledge and specific skills related to CSA. Unfortunately, the problem identified by Dillihunt nearly 20 years ago continues today. This can be remedied through training and proper supervision, which effectively increase helpers' ability to assist clients with a history of sexual abuse (Dugmore & Channell, 2010).

In this study, 59% of the students indicated that they were unprepared to provide counseling services to adults with a CSA history, and the same percent lacked knowledge about how to identify a possible victim of CSA. Seventy percent of the sample revealed that they do not know how to assess trauma symptoms. Seventy-two percent are unready to provide counseling services to child victims or include nonoffending parents/caregivers in counseling. Furthermore, 79% of the students do not know how to provide psychoeducation about CSA prevention, and 82% are not prepared to implement evidence-based interventions.

This is especially concerning since evidence-based practices may improve client outcomes as well as increase compassion satisfaction and decrease compassion fatigue and burnout (Craig & Sprang, 2010). Further, evidence-based practices may help clinicians feel more prepared to “deal with the complexities and horrors of trauma work” (Craig & Sprang, p. 335).

Surprisingly, students rated themselves highest in terms of their ability to hear the details of a victim’s CSA experience (81% agreeing or strongly agreeing that they are prepared). Although they believe they are capable, it is possible that the actual experience will be more overwhelming than they anticipate. “To hear a child talk of abuse, to see her fear, even without hearing the details, can be distressing even for experienced therapists” (Jones & Morris, 2007, p. 236). Supervisors must help students address their ability to stay fully present with the client and avoid pulling away emotionally or shifting focus away from the trauma (Ventura, 2010).

Data was analyzed to explore if the lack of readiness was related to the number of credits completed. Although students at the end of their program had higher total competency scores, major gaps in their CSA perceived readiness were still evident indicating that many students are leaving the program feeling unprepared.

Several demographic features significantly increased competency scores: previous work or volunteer experience with CSA victims, participation in CSA trainings, and supervised field experience (e.g., onsite practicum and off campus internship). Thus it seems competency is related to exposure to victims, receiving information about CSA, and supervision. Bryant (2009) reported similar findings in a study of school counselors and their child abuse reporting behaviors, uncovering that the school counselors’ knowledge about reporting was a result of past professional experiences.

Students who participated in the survey indicated a desire for additional training in CSA. Ninety-four percent (N = 286) stated that they would take a CSA elective, and 94% of the sample said that they think a course in CSA should be required. It seems students are aware of their deficits in the area of CSA and desire additional training to address their insufficient skill set.

Students-in-Training with a History of CSA

It is not uncommon for students pursuing a career in a helping profession to have experienced CSA firsthand. In this sample, 17% disclosed a history of CSA. Other studies have indicated that nearly 30% of psychology students (Adams & Riggs, 2008) as well as professional helpers have a childhood trauma history (which may include but is not limited to CSA) (Folette, Polusny, & Milbeck, 1994; Pope & Feldman-Summers, 1992). It is possible that an unresolved experience of abuse could negatively impact students' readiness to counsel survivors of CSA. A research synthesis of 16 different studies published between 1994 and 2003 indicated there is sufficient support for the assertion that personal trauma history increases the risk of vicarious traumatization (Baird & Kracen, 2006). Additionally, students with a trauma history may be at a higher risk for a self-sacrificing defense style, which increases vicarious trauma symptoms (Adams & Riggs, 2008).

Conversely, counselors who understand firsthand the pain of childhood trauma and have processed their experiences have the potential to greatly assist survivors (Gardner, 2008). In this study, students who reported a CSA history did not significantly differ than those with no history of CSA with regard to mean competency scores. For faculty members training future helpers, it is important to consider students' experiences and how those may help or hinder them on their path to becoming a counselor. Supervisors are in a position to identify students

who are experiencing vicarious trauma and refer them to counseling to address personal trauma histories that may be unresolved (Adams & Riggs; Foster, 2011).

Implications for Counseling Training Programs

The results indicated that there is a clear need for additional training in the area of CSA. Faculty members can help bridge this gap through providing multiple opportunities for students to attain both knowledge and skills (e.g., workshops, online national trainings such as TF-CBT, elective or required courses, fieldwork with victims). One training program found that an hour long web-based training on the warning signs and symptoms of child maltreatment along with reporting procedures resulted in statistically significant increases in students' knowledge (Kenny, 2007). Trainings like this can be required for students to increase awareness about child abuse.

Although web-based trainings are efficient, students also benefit from processing exposure to trauma in the classroom. Faculty can provide topical lectures, facilitate discussions, and provide opportunities for reflection through assigned readings and journaling (Sommer, 2008). Instructors can share their own reactions to trauma material to normalize the challenges associated with trauma work, which may allow students to share openly their own difficulties (Cunningham, 2003; Fucci, 2008). Additionally, real cases can also be provided, such as narratives written by children about their abuse (Foster & Hagedorn, 2014a; Foster & Hagedorn, 2014b). These firsthand accounts provide students exposure to traumatic content and an opportunity to process it. Exposure to narratives also may increase students' ability to respond appropriately to a clients' disclosure. When using victims stories, faculty members need to be prepared to process students' reactions to the traumatic material (e.g., feeling shocked, overwhelmed, or angry) (Jones, 2002; Foster, 2011).

Along with instruction about trauma and exposure to real life experiences of victims, instructors must communicate the necessity of self-care, provide opportunities for development of comprehensive plans, and provide accountability for the management of self-care. Guided imagery and breath work have been suggested for use with students learning about trauma (Sommer, 2008). Mindfulness training may also be beneficial for helpers who are working with clients who have experienced trauma (Harrison & Westwood, 2009). Specifically, mindfulness practices enhance helpers' patience and compassion toward themselves and their clients and helps them remain both calm and grounded, especially while clients share details of their trauma.

Although infusing trauma education throughout curriculum has benefits, there is also a strong argument for a standalone course. Black (2008) advocated for a course to lower the likelihood that students will experience traumatic stress. Black emphasized preparing them to be reflective practitioners, thus gaining resources to process future exposure to traumatic material. In the pilot study, students who attended a 36-hour course reported an increased competency in providing counseling for individuals who have experienced trauma.

Research has demonstrated that trauma training correlates with burnout, with low levels of training predicting higher levels of burnout (Craig & Sprang, 2010). Since students without training and those with only minimal training are both at a high risk of experiencing vicarious trauma, "students need substantial trauma-specific training in the context of a full semester of coursework or multiple intensive workshops in order to protect themselves against the potential negative impact of trauma counseling" (Adams & Riggs, 2008, p. 32). Training programs that do not properly prepare their students for trauma work, including the potential for vicarious trauma, leave students vulnerable and put their future clients at risk (Sommer,

2008). The research is clear that the helping professionals who work with individuals who have experienced trauma are also effected emotionally, physically, cognitively, socially, interpersonally, and spiritually and necessitate training in self-care strategies (Pryce, Shckelford, & Pryce, 2007).

Each individual training institution should consider their current curriculum and identify areas for improvement so that students are well prepared to address the needs of CSA victims. Comprehensive training must both heighten one's knowledge about sexual abuse and provide supervised field experiences with CSA clientele (Kenny & Abreu, 2015). According to the authors, trainings are most effective when delivered at multiple check points in a professional's development (pre-service, in-service, and continuing education). Graduate programs provide an introduction to child sexual abuse work, which is best implemented early in the student's program of study. Developing students' knowledge be accomplished through a variety of modalities such as in-person trainings, web-based training, infusion in multiple courses, trauma specific courses, and supervised field-based experiences. The authors discuss 10 specific areas that must be covered for *minimum* competency: (1) reporting procedures and laws, (2) assessment of abuse, (3) symptoms, (4) offenders, (5) nature of CSA relationships, (6) disclosure, (7) blaming the victim/nonoffending mother, (8) empirically based treatments for CSA, (9) values and beliefs, and (10) self-care/vicarious traumatization. The first area, reporting procedures and the law, is especially important for students-in-training who are likely to encounter CSA child victims in their various formal and informal field experiences and are mandated reporters of suspicion of abuse. Although there will likely to obstacles to overcome in the implementation of training (limited room in the curriculum, lack of specific standards addressing sexual abuse, not having a faculty member with expertise in this area),

proper preparation in CSA is essential (Kenny & Abreu, 2015).

Limitations and Future Research

The purpose of this study was to identify students' knowledge and perceived readiness to provide CSA counseling. Self-reports are limited as students may not be able to accurately judge their competency and may inflate their scores as a result of social desirability. Future research could evaluate actual competence through providing CSA case studies. Evaluation of students' responses could reveal their decision making ability, which would likely result in a more accurate assessment of students' current abilities and deficits to address through training. Exploration of the decision making process of counseling professionals as it relates to reporting abuse would also be valuable information for the field (Bryant, 2009).

Additional research could also address the limitation that this study was conducted at a single university. Although the sample was comprised of four campus locations and included students in two distinct disciplines, counselor education and counseling psychology, it did not include students from other universities. Students in other accredited or non-accredited programs may have unique experiences related to their training. Having a faculty member with clinical or research experience in the area of CSA, offering a CSA elective, or requiring a course could impact students' knowledge and perceived readiness to provide CSA counseling. A final limitation to note is that the instrument was created by the author for use in this study based on current child sexual abuse literature. There was not an opportunity to perform a test-retest of the instrument, thus the reliability was not established. Further research is needed with the instrument to address this limitation. Although there were several limitations of the study, the results extend the literature on preparation for CSA work by examining current students' knowledge and self-rated readiness.

Conclusion

This study explored students' knowledge about CSA and perceived competence for working with victims of abuse. A survey was developed to assess students' working knowledge of sexual abuse (facts and statistics) and level of perceived preparedness to provide counseling services. The results indicated gaps in knowledge and low levels of competence. Factors that increased readiness included previous work or volunteer experiences with CSA victims, participation in CSA trainings, and supervised field experience. The vast majority students stated that they would take a CSA course if it were offered and believed a course on the topic should be required. The author echoes the call of Oz (2010) to recognize "childhood sexual abuse as a specialized field requiring specialized training both at the graduate level and in continuing postgraduate education" (p. 1). Specific CSA training guidelines need to be established for graduate students (Kitzrow, 2002) so that they can acquire the skills needed to enter the world of victims and facilitate hope and healing.

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A Pedagogical Framework for Counselor Educators working with Millennial Students

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While literature has concluded that millennial students are dedicated and highly motivated, students may be less patient with the process given that they have grown up in a digital world with information available in seconds (Smith & Koltz, 2012). Therefore, it seems important to consider how millennial generational characteristics fit within the context of a counseling program's educational environment. The authors situate characteristics of the millennial generation in four theoretical domains to provide pedagogical framework for counselor educators to consider when working with students from the millennial generation. Understanding shifts in generational groups and similarities within each group may provide educators an opportunity to reevaluate traditional pedagogical approaches and to construct new ways of teaching and learning.

Keywords: counselor education, counselor development, pedagogy, instructional theory, millennial generation

Counselor education includes a developmental progression of learning (Furr & Carroll, 2003). While educational research has concluded that millennial students are dedicated and highly motivated, generational characteristics in the literature suggest that in a counselor education program they might tend to be less patient with the process because they have grown up in a digital world where information is available in seconds (Smith & Koltz, 2012). Given that counseling is a developmental learning process and the millennial students present with unique characteristics different from previous generations, it seems important to understand how these characteristics impact counselor training. To do this, the authors will define millennial generation, introduce four theoretical domains of education, and situate characteristics of the millennial generation in the theoretical domains to provide a pedagogical framework for counselor educators to consider when working with this generation.

Educational research has indicated that 2010 was the highest enrollment year for millennials to enter college (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Generational research suggests that there are characteristics that make generations both similar and distinct with each other (Elam, Stratton, & Gibson, 2007, Howe & Strauss, 2000, Smith & Koltz, 2012). As a generation of students, the Millennials are extremely dedicated and committed; however, they are the first generation to experience an entirely digital world. They are used to information being “at their fingertips,” and this experience of instant availability of information may present both challenges and strengths for educators in the context of a counseling program. Existent literature has neither described strengths nor challenges in the context of a specific academic area of study (Smith & Koltz, 2012); nor, has the literature specifically explored the generational connection to learning, teaching, curriculum and governance in the classroom. Learning from both the strengths and challenges of this generation can create a stronger educative process (Smith & Koltz, 2012).

Who are the Millennials?

The Millennial generation encompasses a group of United States students born between 1981-2002 (Elam, et al., 2007), and includes roughly 80 million people which is approximately 41% of the U.S. population (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Millennial students appeared on college campuses beginning in 2000. While it is easy to generalize about the different generations, recent literature has consistently identified themes that are characteristic of Millennial students as well as offered suggestions for educators working with Millennial students (Dede, 2005; Elam, et al., 2007; Gleason, 2007-2008; Kattner, 2009; Lowery, 2004; Murphy, 2010; Sax, 2003; Wilson, 2004).

The following characteristics have been used to describe the Millennial generation: specialness, confidence, high achievers, pressured to succeed, and accepting of a diverse society

(Elam, et al., 2007; Gleason, 2007-2008; Howe & Strauss, 2003; Lowery, 2004; McGlynn, 2008). For some educators, it is difficult to ascribe characteristics such as these to a generation of students as they may seemingly create a one-dimensional or stereotypical view of this new generation of students; however, educational research (Nargundkar & Shrikande, 2012; Twenge, 2013) has consistently indicated that the cultural norm for this generation of university students in the United States has undoubtedly shifted. Additionally, Sweeney (2006) noted that while not all members of a generational cohort behave the same, his research on millennial student college behaviors suggest a consistency across college campuses. While millennials present with strengths such as dedication, driven to be successful, motivated to address social issues, skillful multitaskers, and team orientation, these strengths also present as unique challenges for educators at the college level (Elam, Stratton, & Gibson, 2007). For counselor educators, the concept of recognizing differences within a group as well as universal qualities is at the very heart of multicultural counseling (Sue & Sue, 2003).

According to Twenge (2013) generational differences often reflect larger cultural changes within society with the most influential psychological shift from the last several decades being the focus on the individual experience. This shift has had significant advantages in terms of rights of women and minorities; however, there are distinct drawbacks with this generational mindset particularly with the emergence of too much self focus in the millennial generation (Twenge, 2013).

In the counseling field, educators emphasize a holistic view of self. This includes consideration of students as individuals, including their schema of how they view themselves, others, and the world while also understanding individuals within a larger context (Sue & Sue, 2003). Cultural consideration also includes generation. Understanding shifts in generational

groups and similarities within each group may provide counselor educators an opportunity to reevaluate traditional pedagogical approaches and construct new ways of teaching and learning.

For this article, the authors have woven together the characteristics of the millennial generation to more carefully examine prior research findings regarding students and integrated them into a pedagogical theory that incorporates four domains of education: teaching, curriculum, governance, and learning (Gowin, 1981) to more fully understand how to approach educating millennial students. Additionally, suggestions for counselor educators are incorporated in the framework. The intent of the authors is to inform counselor educators of the differences within the millennial generation and begin a discourse about how typical counselor education strategies may need to be reconsidered when training a new generation of students.

Gowin's Four Domains of Education

The purpose for integrating Gowin's (1981) theoretical framework within a discussion of millennial characteristics is to expand the discussion in counselor education literature regarding the varied roles that counselor educators utilize beyond teaching and supervision. Gowin (1981) emphasized the importance of meaning in his theory of educating. He noted that the process of education should result in meaningful change, and was focused on developing habits in students that lead to growth. However, he also noted that the goal in education should be to help students take responsibility for their learning. This seems particularly relevant given millennial generational characteristics already described. Counseling students, like many graduate students, want structure, supervision, and feedback, as well as praise for their counseling work (Furr & Carroll, 2003; Howe & Strauss, 2003); however, this notion often contradicts with the expectations of graduate education where students are expected to be self-motivated and self-directed.

The goal of Gowin's (1981) pedagogical theory is to change the meaning of students' experience. As with any generation of students the millennial students have characteristics which pose strengths and challenges when learning to become a counselor. As noted earlier, this generation has embraced the established cultural norm of individualism, perhaps too ardently (Twenge, 2013); therefore, this theory supposes that through the process of education that habitual dispositions, a person's usual way of approaching situations, can change. This change takes place when the student can integrate thinking, feeling, and acting in an experience Gowin labels- felt significance. Felt significance is achieved in education through the four domains: teaching, learning, curriculum and governance.

Gowin's (1981) domains of education will be explained in the following paragraphs and then millennial characteristics will be examined in each of the domains. The four domains are useful to counselor educators as they provide an understanding of both the structure and the process of knowledge construction. Gowin's theory stressed the significance of the learners experience in education by placing emphasis on the social interaction between the teacher and student as the means for knowledge construction; therefore, the focus of this article highlights a constructivist perspective applied to education. A constructivist approach encourages the students to become more active in the process of education, which is a critical skill necessary to become a successful counselor (Granello, 2000; Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998).

Teaching

From Gowin's (1981) perspective, teaching should not be a one-sided event; rather, it should be an experience that culminates in the experience of shared meaning by teacher and student (i.e. social construction). It is a process in which the student and the teacher explore and examine concepts side by side where the teacher acts intentionally to alter the meaning of a

student's experience using curriculum materials. Essentially, Gowin's (1981) aim of teaching is to create knowledge through shared meaning. Knowledge creation is strongly influenced by personal experiences and prior knowledge (Snowman & Biehler, 2006); therefore, in the context of a counselor education program it is important that the educator choose materials and present information in such a way that students' past experiences and prior knowledge are expanded to include a greater understanding of counseling concepts. The educator acts as a co-investigator with the students using reflective dialogue, personal reflection, as well as experiential activities to promote collaboration and mutual meaning-making (Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998).

From Gowin's (1981) perspective the presentation of materials should include methods that stimulate interest and further investigation on the part of the student. This type of perspective is different from the traditional didactic, knowledge centered practice of teaching. A discussion or experiential pedagogical perspective tends to provide a more indirect method of teaching. Educational research suggested that direct (didactic) methods of teaching are not entirely effective with adult learners (Shreeve, 2008); therefore, Gowin noted that while indirect teaching methods (ie. problem based, discussion oriented, experiential) with a Socratic teaching quality may seem like an abdication of responsibility they are not because this type of method promotes a greater responsibility on the part of the learner. Bell Hooks (1994) in a similar vein stated, "I enter the classroom with the assumption that we must build 'community' to create a climate of openness and intellectual rigor" (p. 40). The students who learn in this type of educative learning environment emerge with a greater understanding that they are responsible for their learning. This is largely accomplished through greater emphasis on student to student interactions, as well as student to educative materials interactions. The next section will integrate

Gowin's (1981) theory of educating with millennial generation characteristics, particularly as they relate to teaching in a counselor education program.

Teaching and Millennial Students

While millennial students have been characterized as having goals of high achievement, research indicated that many current students simultaneously struggle with the expectation of high academic demands (Stewart & Bernhardt, 2010). Furthermore, students who exhibit academic difficulty have been described as impulsive and having low frustration tolerance, which may translate into difficulty tolerating the process of working through difficult academic requirements. One potential explanation for academic struggles is that these students are used to having answers readily available through technology and parents (Smith & Koltz, 2012). For example, research indicated that millennial students struggle to read assigned material especially lengthy text (Twenge, 2013). Counselor educators may need to consider alternate ways to hold students accountable for their reading. Sweeney (2006) reported this finding as well, but extended it to course directions. Millennial students overall appreciate hands on learning as opposed to reading directions. Additionally, Twenge found that lesson plans may need to be delivered in shorter time frames and incorporate a variety of materials such as videos and experiential activities. One recent study explored undergraduate and graduate student evaluations of instruction (Nargundkar & Shrikande, 2012). They found that millennial students are more dependent on adults to motivate and guide them and that this is a critical component to teaching effectiveness than it had been in prior generations.

In terms of teaching, Twenge (2013) recommended that instructors of millennials may need to prepare students through engaging them in experiential strategies that promote their involvement and motivation in learning (Twenge, 2013). For example, counselor educators

might consider using technology based strategies such as blogs and social bookmarking (like Pinterest). Additionally, millennial students appreciate structure which incorporates clearly identified expectations. From the perspective of experiential learning it seems important to blend these two ideas. Instructors may find that they will need to be very clear and precise with course expectations and classroom expectations.

Regarding course and lesson format, counselor education programs tend to be experiential, skills based, and expect a high degree of self-reflection and sharing especially in supervision (Smith & Koltz, 2012); however, the type of vulnerability that is generally expected in a counseling program may be confusing to students who have experienced distant relationships with instructors rather than intimate ones (Studer & Blanche, 2012; Smith & Koltz, 2012). Thus, if they struggle with intimacy and vulnerability in experiential coursework or supervision, students may be viewed as disingenuous, rather than inexperienced in intimately relating. Additionally, students, who are inexperienced at negotiating intimate interpersonal relationships, may be uncomfortable in a one on one relationship with a supervisor and with clients. Furthermore, because this generation is comfortable with communicating technologically (internet, email, texting, distance learning), confronting issues with people in person may seem invasive and rude. Consistent with this concern, Studer and O-Bannon (2012) expressed concerns that millennial students may have difficulty with critical thinking skills and self-reflection. Learning counseling skills requires individuals to have a high degree of self-reflection, and millennials may have developed a highly developed ability to memorize information given that they experienced the standardized examinations required by No Child Left Behind (Studer & O-Bannon, 2012).

Additionally, the way in which counselor educators have communicated class expectations may need to change. Furr and Carroll (2003) in their study exploring critical incidents for students in counselor education found that experiential learning was a constant theme as it related to counseling student growth and development; however, counselor educators may find that millennials are resistant to experiential learning because the expectations around this type of learning may not seem clear (Nargundkar & Shrikande, 2012). Counselor educators may need to consider how to provide more explanation for and about experiential learning, so that millennial counseling students understand how the experiential activity connects with the subject matter. Additionally, Twenge (2013) found that millennials did not always appreciate the process of working through academic material or requirements, so this may mean that counselor educators may need to do more to motivate students in the classroom in terms of their self-efficacy with graduate level work.

While millennial students may need more motivation, the process of experiential learning has the potential to create an environment that is likely less overwhelming to students. Overall, it seems important though to communicate why the experiential learning is important and used in counselor education, so that they will be more engaged in the learning process (Nargundkar & Shrikande, 2012). Research has demonstrated this type of learning environment is a comfortable modality for millennial students (Howe & Strauss, 2003); however, research regarding millennials has also found that they want structure (Twenge, 2013). While this type of learning provides an opportunity for counseling students to grapple with what is like to not know and construct knowledge together as a group, counselor educators may find that it is not comfortable for some students (Smith & Koltz, 2012). Therefore, counselor educators who provide a rationale and expectation for indirect methods may find it helpful to reduce resistance.

Millennial students prefer to work in groups (Studer & O-Bannon, 2012); however, large classroom discussion may be more difficult given that there is a greater level of self disclosure and vulnerability involved. They strive to do well, so they may be more reluctant to participate in group discussions where they are unsure what the “correct” answer is. They are so used to technology based communication (Howe & Strauss, 2003) that smaller groups and one on one forms of communication may be more comfortable than large classroom discussions. Large classroom discussions engage students in active learning and stimulate critical thinking (Roehling, Vander-Kooi, Dykema, Quisenberry, & Vandlen, 2011). However, millennials tend to remain silent and let a handful of their classmates carry the burden of the discussion (Howard, James, and Taylor, 2002). Roehling et al. (2011) found several helpful factors related to engaging millennial students in classroom discussion. These factors included developing conditions conducive to discussion such as the professor’s attitude about the subject, the professor’s ability to moderate the discussion, the classroom atmosphere, and student behaviors and attitudes. Additionally, Roehling et al. found that millennials prefer informal settings where the professor projects warmth.

Gowin (1981) suggested the importance of using old knowledge to build new knowledge in terms of helping students to recognize what they already know and how they understand their own and others’ experiences. Gowin stated that, “To educate is to change the *meaning* of human experience.” (p. 39) For counselor educators it is important to help students understand and become aware of how to organize their current knowledge and misconceptions as well as integrate it with new knowledge to increase students’ conscious awareness. Again, while this may not seem new it is important to recognize that old ways and methods of introducing indirect teaching methods like social constructivism in the classroom may need to account for

generational differences with millennial students. Gowin acknowledged that indirect teaching methods facilitate student responsibility and independence in their learning; however, these types of methods when used with counseling students mirror the counseling process in that it encourages students to find out or discover for themselves.

When counselor training is complete, the hope is that students will rely on what they have learned and will not depend on the teacher. This type of approach would be particularly applicable with millennial counseling students as the aim is to help students feel confident and take responsibility for their process of learning when research would indicate that millennial students depend heavily on parents' intervention in their educational experience (Elam, et al., 2007). For Millennial students who demonstrate entitlement, effective pedagogical methods that enhance self-awareness, including awareness of the impact of self on others including an exploration of their own values versus others differing values will create a developmental learning process and assist with student's personal and professional growth.

Curriculum

The second domain of education according to Gowin (1981) is curriculum. Curriculum is defined as the actual materials that are used in the educational event (Gowin, 1981). While teaching references the construction of knowledge, curriculum references the structure of knowledge. Essentially, curriculum encompasses the choices an educator makes about the materials used to stimulate learner interest. The traditional view of curriculum defines it as the subject taught; however, a broader view of curriculum could be understood as the content used to stimulate learning or the mutual engagement between the teacher and the student discussed in the domain of teaching.

Gowin (1981) also suggested that curriculum should be viewed as “vehicles of criteria of excellence” (p. 112). In counselor education, the criterion of excellence is defined by the standards set forth by The Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2016). Counseling programs with this accreditation must teach from the eight core areas (professional orientation and ethical practice, social and cultural diversity, human growth and development, career development, helping relationships, group work, assessment, research and program evaluation), identified in CACREP standards.

Curriculum and Millennial Students

Millennial students are informed consumers of education (Sweeney, 2006), and seem to be educated about the value of accreditation and actively seek it out. However, while they are informed and seek out accreditation, the actual curriculum of counselor education programs (eight core areas of CACREP) may seem limiting to millennial students who are accustomed to a wide array of choices when it comes to their education and professional goals. Additionally, millennial students want to understand why they are being taught something as they are expecting a large array of choices (Sweeney, 2006). In many ways, millennials have consumeristic characteristics regarding their education (Sweeney, 2006). They appreciate and expect increased learning options and services. They want an education that is customized for their individual needs and educational plans (Dede, 2005). For counseling students, this may present as expectations for more course choices beyond the foundational counseling courses. Counseling programs may need to consider additional discussion with applicants and students regarding course curriculum offerings. Particularly, for CACREP accredited programs incorporating a discussion of CACREP and why the 8 core areas are critical to becoming well educated counselors may avoid any perceived resistance to the curriculum being presented. With

that being said, millennial students may be perceived as being resistant when they may just really not understand why the course selection does not include a wider array of options. It seems important to not assume that the perceived resistance is actual resistance. They may simply just not know why the program has the curriculum designed a certain way, or understand what they perceive as a lack of options.

Another area of curriculum to consider pertains to diversity. Research has documented that millennial students are more accepting of diversity and are more supportive of individual rights than prior generations (Twenge, 2013). However, while this generation may support equality, they appear to struggle with grasping the complexity of multicultural diversity and social justice issues. Furthermore, since outward acceptance of differences is typical for this generation, personal conflict around diversity may not be visible or obvious (Broido, 2004; Sweeney, 2006). Students may perceive themselves as accepting of different cultures by attending ethnic festivals or having close friends from different cultures (Sweeney, 2006); however, this does not mean that they have explored their own cultural- self extensively (Smith & Koltz, 2012). Counseling educators may notice students making generalities or grouping different cultures together rather than examining their assumptions, reactions, and biases. As a result, counseling students may not notice or address differences in others and may neglect to seek understanding of why their clients choose to identify themselves as they do (Smith & Koltz, 2012). Concurrently, students may fail to address dynamics between themselves and their clients.

Twenge (2013) suggested that while teaching strategies may need to shift with the millennial generation, educators should hold to their expectations regarding curriculum and content. They may need to communicate more of a rationale for their curriculum and content which may not have been as necessary as the past. The expectations of the millennial generation

may require universities and educators to be more innovative if they are willing to learn about other ways to engage these students (Sweeney, 2006).

Governance

Governance in the educative process involves power (Gowin, 1981). According to Gowin, “We govern through mediated meanings by telling ourselves and others what events mean, we come to make sense of our experience, and we come to have power over nature and experience” (p. 155). Essentially, the policies and procedures that control a classroom are going to have an impact on the constructed meaning that emerges from the experience. Teachers make decisions in the classroom that ultimately will construct meaning and have an impact upon subsequent effort in the classroom. Therefore, governance is a balance of the needs of all stakeholders (teachers, students, administrators, the community) in the act of educating (Gowin).

For counselor educators, the act of governance can take on a variety of micro and macro contexts. For example, in the classroom a micro context includes classroom policies with regard to expectations like late papers and participation; however, from a macro perspective this includes the larger community of the counseling field. Counselor educators simultaneously balance encouraging student growth and protecting the community at large from harm (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). This balance can be difficult to explain to students, particularly when remediation practices are involved.

Governance and Millennial Students

Governance, in terms of the balance of power between instructors and students, will need to be addressed differently as students’ power structure with authority figures (e.g., relationships with parents, teachers) shifts across generations. Since specialness is a unique characteristic of this generation, millennial students may expect that relationships with instructors to be largely

egalitarian (Smith & Koltz, 2012). However, Howe and Strauss (2000) also found that millennial students are conventional and respectful.

For counseling students, they will likely embrace the rules and course expectations if they are communicated. Unlike previous generations, millennials do not seem to have an inherent understanding of educational expectations. This makes sense given that they had strong relationships with their parents and highly depended upon them for direction (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Therefore, it may be necessary to have an extensive conversation at the start of classes regarding expectations. Furthermore, these students may struggle initially recognizing the needs of others, including their instructors, expecting them to work around their schedules particularly as it relates to email communication. Twenge (2013) found that millennial students value leisure and may be professionals who request a lighter work load. This may be problematic within a 60-credit counselor education program where the demands of the program on student time and energy are significant. Additionally, the very nature of counseling requires one to be able to give of self at sometimes unpredictable hours. Therefore, it seems necessary in terms of governance to clearly articulate not only the expectations of a counseling program micro level, but what students can expect to experience within the profession of counseling at the macro level. Also, many students are also unprepared for the rigorous demands of licensure and certification upon graduation. It seems especially important to be upfront with millennial students at the start of training regarding the process it will be to become a professional counselor. Given this generation is pressured to succeed, they will likely respond well to clearly given course, program and professional expectations (Smith & Koltz, 2012).

Learning

Learning is the fourth area of Gowin's (1981) pedagogical model. While teaching, curriculum and governance are the responsibilities of the teacher, Gowin purposed that with learning the responsibility shifts to the student. Learning involves choice on the part of the learner. To educate is an event, which changes the meaning of human experience. To learn is a process in which the learner chooses to participate in order to facilitate new meaning.

From a counselor education perspective, a large aspect of learning involves accepting the ambiguity of the counseling field and that there may be many right answers. In addition, it also involves embracing the process of learning in a counselor education program (Smith & Koltz, 2012). Granello (2000) contended that the most effective way to learn in counselor education is to engage in learning activities that simulate as closely as possible the real act of what students will encounter in clinical work with clients.

Millennial Students and Learning

Students' learning and sense of responsibility and ownership of their learning process is important to consider in terms of generational changes. Gowin (1981) defined learning as the "engaged reorganization of an existing understanding of meaning which occurs through being guided by teachers and materials, thus these themes are often intertwined" (p. 124). To engage in the learning process, the learner must be conscious of how the new knowledge fits with their old knowledge.

To solidify this connection, meaning and integration of new knowledge, it may require repetition through practice. This learning process particularly applies to counseling students where there is much ambiguity in the process of integrating new concepts. Millennial students are used to being treated as special, and they tend to have high expectations of themselves (Smith

& Koltz, 2012). Since learning to become a counselor is not a process that can be fast tracked, millennial students may become discouraged and disconnected from learning due to the high degree of ambiguity involved in the counselor training process (Smith & Koltz, 2012). However, critical thinking is stimulated when students are engaged in questioning their knowledge, behaviors, and practices. They are challenged in a process of self-discovery. With millennial counseling students, this is particularly applicable to the learning process as these students struggle with tolerating ambiguity (ie. not knowing, not having clear answers) especially when engaging face-to-face with others who are struggling to solve their own problems. Learning to tolerate ambiguity may help millennial students work through entitlement and self-focus as they learn to let go of control and problem solving and learn what it means to just simply be with a client who is struggling.

Finally, Elam, et al. (2007) and Howe and Strauss (2000) have noted that students' curricula prior to attending college may have inadvertently emphasized rote learning and reliance on technology, which may have caused them to refrain from classroom reflection. Roehling et al. (2011) found that millennial students at times are reluctant to participate in classroom discussion even when they value them. As a consequence, students may have decreased ability to be critical thinkers, or to be introspective and self-reflective (Murray, 1997). Instructors may need to hold students accountable to class participation and discussion in ways that they may not have had to in the past. Additionally, Roehling et al. (2011) found in a focus group study with millennials that millennials appreciated instructors who develop a comfortable classroom atmosphere at the beginning of the class and establish expectations for participation. Additionally, millennial students also discussed that they will engage in conversation if they know each other and have a comfort level established with their classmates. So, they appreciated instructors who engaged in

exercises in which students could get to know each other. It seems important to recognize that educators may not want to expect that these students will simply engage actively in their learning without communicated expectations. Roehling et al. (2011) also found that millennial students will not speak if they are unsure how their comments will be understood. While very confident in some ways, millennial students often feel quite vulnerable in the classroom. Perhaps, this is the result of the “helicopter” style of parenting millennial students received (Segrin et al., 2012). Bradley-Geist, and Olson-Buchanan (2014) found that over-parenting led to lower self-efficacy in college students. Unfortunately, this style of parenting while supportive may not have produced children who feel confident in their own abilities.

Conclusion and Implications for Future Research

The authors have discussed the generational impact of educating millennial students. This is an area of research that has not been addressed in the counselor education field; yet, has important considerations for the training of counselors. The four domains of education: teaching, curriculum, governance and learning were used to provide a framework to understand and explore strategies to best educate millennial counseling students. While significant attention has been given to developmental considerations in counselor education (Furr & Carroll, 2003), no articles could be found in counselor education literature that addressed consideration of generational characteristics. The millennial generation is the newest generation of students emerging in counselor education programs; therefore, it is imperative to remain knowledgeable about the strengths and challenges of these students. Additionally, considering how to apply those strengths and challenges within the framework of pedagogical theory lends itself to intentional practice, something that we teach students to do in counselor education.

Areas of future research should include exploration of the types teaching and supervision methods most effective with millennial counseling students. Counselor education literature has documented the efficacy of experiential learning methods (Furr & Carrol, 2003, Granello, 2007), and millennial research (Elam, et al, 2007; Howe & Strauss, 2000; Sweeney 2006) confirmed that millennial students seem to appreciate this type of teaching method. However, it seems important to encourage more studies regarding this topic to ensure that we are training a competent generation of counseling students. Perhaps, it will not impact the foundation of what counselor educator believes is necessary to teach counselors, but it may help educators understand their audience and how to train competent counselors in the future. Additionally, in counselor education programs there is often a blend of younger and older generations. More research is needed to understand how to engage classrooms with two or more generations. Overall, the experience of generational differences and the impact of generation in counselor training and supervision is a little explored area.

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Teaching Online Group Counseling Skills in an On-Campus Group Counseling Course

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Counselors are increasingly incorporating digital modalities into their practices. As such, counseling students must be trained to provide such types of counseling within their degree programs. This article outlines an example curriculum for an on-campus group counseling class wherein students receive training and participate in an online, videoconferencing process group.

Keywords: online counseling, technology, group counseling, training

Technology is altering the counseling profession; myriad forms of online counseling exist and the delivery continues to expand (Richards & Vigano, 2013). The American Counseling Association (2014) espouses this paradigm shift as it stated in the Code of Ethics, “Counselors understand that the profession of counseling may no longer be limited to in-person, face-to-face interactions” (p. 17). However, the speed at which the field is evolving is disconcerting as the training required to be an effective online counselor is lacking (Anthony, 2015). The training of counselors to transition face-to-face counseling skills to an online environment has become essential in order to continually promote and maintain efficacious, ethical, and legal practices (Anthony, 2015; Cartreine, Ahern, & Locke, 2010). Because the landscape of service provision has been permanently altered, knowledge and skills regarding online counseling should be intentionally integrated into educational curriculum (Cardenas, Serrano, Flores, De la Rosa, 2008; Mallen, Jenkins, Vogel, & Day, 2011; Mallen, Vogel, & Rochlen, 2005; Trepal, Haberstroh, Duffey, & Evans, 2007). Currently, little is known about how to train counseling

students in the delivery of online counseling (Kozlowski & Holmes, 2014), particularly group counseling (Kit, Wong, D’Rozario, & Teo, 2014).

Forms of Online Counseling

The ways in which clients are receiving counseling services through technological means are vast and varied. Service types include chat-based, email, and videoconferencing and can serve as both standalone and supplementary services used in conjunction with face-to-face services (Abbot, Klein, & Ciechomski, 2005; Barak & Grohol, 2011; Barak, Hen, Boniel-Nissim, Shapira, 2008). Thus far, research on the wide variety of types of online counseling is promising and, overall, validates online counseling as a viable service modality (see Barak et al., 2008 for a full review).

Clients are using different types of online counseling, such as videoconferencing, synchronous chat (e.g., where client and counselor are dialoguing simultaneously), and asynchronous chat (e.g., email or other modalities where client and counselor are not online simultaneously) with mental health professionals as stand-alone services or as supplemental communication to ongoing face-to-face services (Mallen et al., 2005). Clients are now able to obtain services that meet a wide range of needs and presenting issues using different types of online counseling including asynchronous forums/support groups, synchronous groups including videoconference, couples and family counseling, and individual counseling (both text-based and videoconference). Overall, no significant differences exist between distance counseling and traditional face-to-face counseling regardless of the format or delivery type (Barak & Dolev-Cohen, 2006; Barak et al., 2008; Mallen et al., 2005).

Online Group Counseling

Online support groups serve as the predecessor of online counseling, as Skinner and Zack

(2004) noted, “the enduring success of these groups has firmly established the potential of computer-mediated communication to enable the discussion of sensitive personal issues” (p. 435). Online support groups are a type of self-help group that enable people in distress to find others with similar needs and problems, to share feelings and information, provide advice, and develop a support community, but are text-based only and lack a trained counselor facilitator (Barak & Dolev-Cohen, 2006). Online chat forums and support groups allow users to go online whenever they choose to post or read others’ comments offering personal questions, concerns, ideas or support to others about a predetermined topic (i.e., depression, anxiety). Some groups are therapeutic or supportive in nature, while others are strictly psychoeducational and informational (Stevens & Shulman, 2003). Online groups and forums offer social support, which can be beneficial for those who feel isolated. These forums can also provide new ideas for coping with distress (Mallen et al., 2005). According to Stevens and Shulman (2003) online groups “create a sense of universality that eliminates geographical boundaries, and perhaps gender and culture” (p. 257). Current research on therapeutic outcomes is positive and indicates that online support groups offer emotional relief and support for members (Barak & Dolev-Cohen, 2006; Darcy & Dooley, 2007; Freeman et al., 2008; Haug et al., 2008; Lieberman et al., 2010; Webb et al. 2008; White & Dorman, 2001).

Some research has focused on the experience of online groups led by a professional counselor. Overall, these studies show the impact of a distance counselor in a group setting but do not address the situation in which all group members relate electronically. While these studies provide important preliminary information into the efficacy of using technology to mediate group counseling, some methodological drawbacks exist. In one study, group members were present together in the same room and only the group counselor was telecasted into the

group session (Greene et al., 2010). In another study, all group participants accessed the internet-based group remotely, however only the group counselor was visible to each participant and the group members did not synchronously interact with other members (King et al., 2009). In the third study, the groups for caregivers of patients with dementia began in a face-to-face format and then transitioned to the videoconferencing format (Marziali, 2006).

Studies that focus on synchronous professionally-led counseling groups also show positive outcomes with several studies that indicate that online counseling outcomes are comparable to face-to-face group outcomes (Greene et al., 2010; King et al., 2009; Marziali, 2006). Positive outcomes included clients' positive perception of the online counseling experience increased due to the convenience of participating from the comfort of their own home as well as nonsignificant differences in client outcomes when compared with face-to-face groups (King et al., 2009). Marziali's (2006) study of adult caregivers of family members with dementia showed encouraging results including positive counseling outcomes as well as positive client satisfaction with the group process and online modality. Group members felt a strong sense of bonding and cohesion with other group members and the leader (Marziali, 2006). However, group members began the group in a face-to-face format before moving to an online environment. While affirmative outcomes existed, Greene et al. (2010) found that the group members reported feeling unconnected to the group leader who used videoconferencing to lead the group remotely.

Research on counseling outcomes continues to proliferate and data shows the overall effectiveness of a wide variety of online counseling modalities (Richards & Vigano, 2013). However, the training of helping professionals, including counselors-in-training, continues to be overlooked (Anthony, 2015). Appropriate training should be provided in order for practitioners

to adequately and ethically provide online therapeutic services to clients (Anthony, 2015).

Accreditation and Credentialing

The American Counseling Association ethical codes state that counselors should “understand that the profession of counseling may no longer be limited to in-person, face-to-face interactions” (ACA, 2014, p. 17). The Association for Specialists in Group Work’s Best Practices Guidelines mandates group counselor awareness of technological trends in the field (ASGW, 2012). Finally, The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2015) states, “students are to understand the impact of technology on the counseling profession” (2.F.1.j) as well as “understand the impact of technology on the counseling process” (2.F.5.e). CACREP states that students understand “ethical and culturally relevant strategies for establishing and maintaining in-person and technology-assisted relationships” (2.F.5.d) suggesting that students go beyond understanding a general impact and be apprised of skill development and actual interventions. As the services delivery of online counseling has become prolific, so should the training of counseling professionals (Anthony, 2015). Considering the training standards in masters-level counseling programs, it has become clear that new professionals should be technologically-informed upon graduation.

Providing online counseling training is in a stage of relative infancy and most traditional approaches to online counseling training may benefit from new methods including updates regarding online counseling culture, online human behavior, as well as how counseling theories can be applied and understood in an online environment (Anthony, 2015). A Distance Counseling Credential (DCC) was established by the Center for Credentialing and Education in 2006. This credential “ensures standardization of online and distance counseling practices as well as to assure the public that counselors who use distance technologies adhere to a specialized

set of ethical and practice codes” (Trepal et al., 2007, p. 266). The DCC is available to independently licensed professionals and requires a fee paid for independently by the practitioner. At this time, the only way for counseling professionals to receive formalized training in online counseling is to obtain independent licensure and then pay for a separate training course (Trepal et al., 2007). Given the guidelines set forth by relevant accrediting and ethical bodies (e.g., ACA, CACREP, ASGW), the individual credentialing post-licensure is not enough. New graduates of masters-level training programs should encounter training and experiential practice in their programs so that a baseline knowledge of technological counseling issues are widespread through the profession. In 2010, Cartreine et al., (2010) found no specialty tracks or formal training existed within Counseling or Psychology programs dedicated to the delivery of online counseling. In order to address this gap, formal training methods of counselors-in-training must be better understood.

Online Counseling Training in Masters-Level Programs

Considering the increase of digital counseling service provision and the focus on training from professional accrediting bodies, counselor education programs should focus on modifying curriculum and instruction (Trepal et al., 2007). All counseling students should be exposed to digital counseling in their training programs to introduce the complexities of therapeutic delivery in this environment. Counselors-in-training need to learn how to “transfer professional knowledge and skills previously acquired in a face-to-face way” into a digital setting (Cardenas et al., 2008, p. 472). However, little information currently exists regarding how to train counselors in online therapeutic work (Cartreine et al., 2010; Chester & Glass, 2006; Kit et al., 2014; Kozlowski & Holmes, 2014; Trepal et al., 2007).

Available research suggests counselor educators can include a variety of activities to train students in the online counseling modality. Suggested activities include familiarizing counseling students with the efficacy and uses of online counseling, as well as the relevant ethical codes and legal mandates. Another suggested activity is the use of case studies to train counseling students to relate to clients through chat-only communication (Trepal et al., 2007). In addition research suggests the inclusion of asynchronous chat held via a discussion board forum page (similar to a bulletin board) where students post comments, thoughts, and responses to one another throughout the week in between the face-to-face group meetings (Kit et al., 2014). Finally training course should focus on asynchronous (chat-based) and synchronous (videoconference) training designed to support the formation of online clinical skills, interventions within a supervised practice (Cardenas et al. 2008).

Students who participated in course that included online counseling training stated that they believed the online counseling modality would be beneficial to a particular type of client, they expressed trouble with the leadership and facilitation aspects (Kit et al. (2014). In addition, students reported that they felt more confident to provide online services after the training as well as more positive regarding the benefits of the digital services for a wide array of clients (Cardenas et al., 2008). This information shows data-driven outcomes highlighting the beneficial impact of intentional training.

While these training suggestions are crucial to our novice understanding of the issue, they are not enough to thoroughly guide counselor education toward best practices and guidelines of teaching online counseling skills. Considerable information is lacking regarding context and skill-based learning opportunities that work to train counseling students in online counseling. In

particular, videoconferencing group counseling skills are currently underrepresented in the literature.

Videoconferencing Group Counseling

The limited research focused on online, videoconferencing group counseling shows significant challenges to the creation of a therapeutic environment in this modality (Kozlowski & Holmes, 2014, Holmes & Kozlowski, 2015). Research shows several themes regarding group member experiences in online process groups. Themes include a linear discussion (e.g., question and answer), hyper-awareness of the environment, feeling as if the environment was artificial, role confusion within the group, feeling superficially engaged, mistrust toward group members, and feeling disconnected from the group counseling experience (Kozlowski & Holmes, 2014).

A quantitative study compared the experiences of master's-level counseling students between two types of groups, face-to-face and videoconferencing (Holmes & Kozlowski, 2015). Results showed that face-to-face participants had significantly higher perceptions that the approach of the group fit their needs; experienced higher trust levels within the group experience; and felt more connected and present within the group experience when compared to the videoconferencing participants (Holmes & Kozlowski, 2015).

Together, these data portray the complexities and inherent challenges that exist within the context of an online, videoconferencing process group. Both qualitative and quantitative data indicate that counseling students experienced complications with the videoconferencing group counseling modality. Perhaps, these findings suggest that counseling students cannot inherently understand how to facilitate videoconferencing groups without intentional, skill-based training.

Group Counseling Training

Pedagogically, counselor education relies heavily on experiential growth groups for teaching group counseling theories and skills (Ohrt et al., 2014). CACREP (2015) requires at least 10 hours of experiential practice in groups as a training standard in all accredited programs. Counselors-in-training profoundly benefit both inter- and intra-personally through the experiential learning components of group work (Ohrt et al., 2014; Steen, Vasserman-Stokes, Vannatta, 2014). Several beneficial growth factors have been shown to be prevalent in students' experiences including the opportunity for self-disclosure, experiencing vicarious modeling, and feeling validation and genuineness from their classmates (Kiweewa, Gilbride, Luke, & Seward, 2013). Students typically experience participation as both a leader and a member in a group counseling experience, allowing them insight into clients' experiences in therapy (Ieva, Ohrt, Swank, & Young, 2009) knowledge about group dynamics and process, ability to recognize the importance of catharsis and insight (Ohrt, Robinson, & Hagedorn, 2013), as well as the opportunity to practice skills and self-reflection (Ieva et al., (2009).

Counseling students benefit from having the opportunity to practice skills in a real-life context (Shumaker, Ortiz, & Brenninkmeyer, 2011) and data has shown an increase in personal confidence and competence to set personal goals (Young, Reysen, Eskridge, & Ohrt, 2013). Counseling is a nuanced, complex human interaction and students gain understanding and self-confidence through experiential opportunities (Ohrt et al., 2014; Shumaker et al., 2011; Steen et al., 2014). Supervision and journaling through the experiential components are critical to the growth experiences (Luke & Kiweewa, 2010; Steen et al., 2014). A combination of didactic, observation, experiential and supervision strategies are most effective in a group counseling

training course (Riva & Korinek, 2004; Ohrt et al., 2013). As such, this amalgamation was used to incorporate online group counseling into the semester curriculum discussed in this article.

Kit et al., (2014) state that group counselor educators are called to consider the most effective teaching methods in both face-to-face and online formats. In fact, because of the complexity of group counseling, it has been suggested that teaching the two modalities (e.g., face-to-face and online) should be separated into two separate courses (Kit et al., 2014) so that students can master face-to-face counseling skills prior to translating them to a digital environment. However, due to resources and other institutional challenges, additional courses specifically designed to address online counseling issues often cannot be added to existing curriculums.

Group Counseling Course Example

Classroom Context

Students are required to be both a group counseling participant and a group counseling leader for ten weeks throughout the semester as required by the Counseling for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education programs (2015). The exact structure of how this is set up may differ between institution and can be determined by the instructor. The following guidelines are to assist instructors to add an additional online component to a traditional face-to-face environment. However, the guidelines can be amended to meet hybrid or completely online courses.

For the proposed course, students participate in a weekly, three-hour class format. The first several weeks of the semester are didactic instruction focused on group stages, therapeutic group factors, and leadership skills. Throughout the last ten weeks of the semester students are split into two equal groups and are required to participate in 50-minute process groups led by co-

leaders from the other group. The leaders are required to submit group plans to the instructor several days before the class meeting. All groups are monitored through live supervision by the instructor and feedback for the leaders is process afterward.

Student Training of Online Group Counseling

The online group counseling training requires scheduled time both inside and outside of the classroom yet can be inserted into a pre-designed group counseling course. Each component will be described in full below. Flexibility of the instructor is required to amend and adjust the described training schedule to his or her own needs. Much of the course development will be determined by course length, student enrollment, and instructor choice.

Beginning of the Course

As with any other course, expectations should be outlined and defined within the syllabus. The additional online group components take place outside of the classroom environment and the expectation of participation in these groups should be thoroughly explained to students in the beginning of the semester. Students should be clustered together in groups of no more than 6 students. Online context has inherent challenges wherein more than 6 members may not allow for appropriate group cohesion (Kozlowski & Holmes, 2014). However, some flexibility exists so that instructors can accommodate the total number of students enrolled in the course. A range of 4-7 students would be considered appropriate and manageable for the experience. In this context, the members will also take turns leading their online groups once throughout the semester. Therefore, the number of students that comprise each group should be equal to the amount of weeks that online group runs, in order to allow each student to lead once (e.g., 6 students in the group equals 6 weekly meetings).

In the beginning of class, it is important to discuss the need for access to a computer with videoconferencing capabilities. This way, students have several weeks to brainstorm how they might gain access to the necessary equipment if needed. At this time assistive technology must be acquired for students with disabilities in order to provide equal access to the experience. Universities may have technology offices where students can borrow laptops for extended periods of time. The instructor should be flexible and supportive of students who need to gain access to a computer or tablet prior to the online group expectation.

Once it begins, the course runs as a traditional, face-to-face group counseling course with students participating in group participation and leadership activities. In week 8, the online group training is conducted within the classroom. After the training, the students are required to run the online groups each week at a selected time (See Appendix A for an example of course timeline development).

Specialize In-Class Online Group Training

During the eighth week of class, the instructor will train students in the facilitation of online group counseling. The timing of this training is intentional, as prior to having the experience of leading face-to-face groups for several weeks, students will have little to contribute to the discussion and will have not gained personal knowledge of group interactions, challenges of leadership, and group dynamics. The training is built around a discussion facilitated by the course instructor.

Part 1: Overview of Group Work

The instructor begins with a review of the curative factors of group counseling including cohesion, universality, altruism and catharsis. The instructor also reviews the concepts of interpersonal and intrapersonal process, trust, safety, stages of group development and the

importance to group counseling. Finally, the course instructor conducts a conversation with students about their experiences with these concepts in the face-to-face group counseling format that they are currently experiencing within the course. Confidentiality is discussed and students are reminded of their ethical requirements and obligations. Given that the online experiential component takes place within a Group Counseling course, much of the background information will already have been covered throughout the course.

Part 2: Online Environment

Next, the instructor introduces the idea of an online environment in counseling. To do this, the instructor can show an example videos of online conference calls or groups. A visual aid helps to bring the general concepts, challenges, and benefits to students' attention in a concrete way. Students generate a list of ideas regarding their perceptions of benefits and challenges of utilizing online counseling. The instructor may also choose to allow students a brief opportunity to interact in class utilizing technology. In pairs, students log into an online environment and conduct a brief, five-minute conversation through a synchronous chat function (e.g., Google Chat). After an experience of trying to interact in an online environment, students discuss the how this format may impact group facilitation including: therapeutic factors, interpersonal process, intrapersonal process, trust, safety, and stages of development.

A review of the findings from current literature on this topic should be included, in addition to discussion-based learning. Kozlowski and Holmes (2014) found specific challenges to leading online groups including: 1) members experiencing a linear process in which members waited to be called on by the leader in order to participate and significant lag time resulting in awkward interactions; 2) role confusion in which members felt like students in a classroom and waited for their turn to answer a question; 3) role confusion in which leaders lost their sense of

counselor and became teachers, feeling responsible for making members participate and answer; 4) a hyperawareness of the environment and mistrust of other members; and 5) a disconnection between members and the group process which led to the experience of artificial and superficial interactions. By highlighting the challenges to online group counseling, students can be aware of the adversities they may experience as an online group leader and member. Group leaders are more likely to be intentional about planning groups and using a variety of skills after becoming aware of the inherent challenges in connection.

Part 3: Overcoming Limitations and Facilitation Skills

After reviewing the face-to-face group counseling process and how the online environment inhibits the process, the instructor trains students to overcome the limitations. Group leaders should consider how their current training may or may not apply in an online environment. Facilitators should approach group counseling with new skills when entering an environment filled with a myriad of technology issues such as lag times, frequent disconnection, and a void of nonverbal communication. The authors' suggestions below have resulted from three years of experiences facilitating student online groups. These recommendations are beneficial to the training in online group counseling, as they provide concrete examples and suggestions for students to implement when they lead the group process.

Prior to the start of the group, members should be informed about choosing an appropriate, confidential space for their group meeting. They should select a private, quiet room that is free from distractions such as televisions, pets, and other members of their family and also should be instructed to wear headphones to minimize noise and keep group conversation muted to potential external listeners. At this time, the students are told to eliminate other distractions on their computers and commit to staying only in the group platform during the time of the meeting.

The opportunity to engage in other behaviors (e.g., email, web browsing, homework) is ever-present and students should be compelled to resist in order to practice remaining present in group sessions. In addition, members should push the computer several feet away in order to not appear as large, in turn, eliminating the perceived need to “fix” their appearance in the videoconferencing window that shows their reflection. Anecdotal evidence of prior group member experiences describes the reflection as distracting, therefore members should try to minimize distractions in order to pay attention to the group process as it is occurring.

One of the most important components of a counselor’s first meeting with a client in any setting is the informed consent as it provides the client important information about the process and what they can expect from the counseling relationship and overall experience. In online group counseling, this discussion is crucial (Trepal et al., 2007). Informing group members about the challenges to online counseling not only educates clients, but also normalizes some of the problems that may arise in the online group environment. Leaders of online groups should intensely focus the first session discussion on confidentiality and safety in the online group environment. Members should explore concerns such as screen shots, privacy, lack of nonverbal communication, time delays, technological concerns, and plans for reconnecting should the digital connection dissolve. The group should be encouraged to revisit these topics if they are notice that the group is not engaging in the process.

Once the informed consent is thoroughly covered, leaders should allow time for member introductions. In an online group format, the introduction phase may necessitate more time than in a face-to-face context. This extra time allows for familiarity with each other and the environment. When facilitating rapport between members, group leaders should consider utilizing the uniqueness of the online environment as opposed to trying to simply recreate face-

to-face group counseling in different format. Leaders should consider how members could utilize their space and computers in creative ways. For example, members can find objects in their home to share with members that represent their identity, pictures from their computers or home, or a favorite song from their playlist. In later sessions, group leaders can also consider how to incorporate technology through the use of shared Web 2.0 spaces.

Counseling skills can be transferred to the online group environment in an intentional way. Leaders can begin to learn to utilize the uniqueness of the online environment in order to facilitate the use of their previously learned counseling skills. One helpful technique is to normalize the awkward silence that frequently occurs due to the Internet connection lag time. For example, leaders may address the notion of lag time at the beginning of each group and make members aware that this may take place. The leader can also structure how he or she will handle any disconnections that happen so that members know what to expect from the group process should a member drop out or get interrupted through disconnection. Also, leaders should be intentional and alert members when they are applying silence in the group. For example, leaders should deliberately ask a member or all members to take time to process their thoughts and feelings about an issue after it is presented in the group. This separates therapeutic silence from inadvertent lag time.

Secondly, the group should discuss how the lack of nonverbal communication might impact the group experience. Members should be encouraged to express themselves verbally and to speak out when they are feeling disconnected. Members may consider implementing visual signals for types of communication, such as when they would like to share. Leaders should both give more verbal encouragers as encourage members to do the same. Trepal et al., (2007) discuss an array of options that counselors have when responding to clients in an online

counseling modality. Counselors can address the issue of missing or subtle nonverbal communication and ask members to address this in a verbal fashion throughout the group process by talking out loud and asking questions. Counselors should feel compelled to address any missing or confusing information through narrative discussion, allowing for genuine dialogue regarding the client's feelings and experiences.

Group leaders need to address the role confusion that occurs when leading online groups (Kozlowski & Holmes, 2014). Members in online groups tend to take on the role of a student and struggle to understand their role as a therapeutic group member. For example, members have been found to wait to be called on, as if in class, and not respond to other members' self-disclosure in a spontaneous, genuine way. In addition, leaders should not take on a teacher-like role and call on members in a linear fashion. Leaders should allow group members to take responsibility for sharing and working within the group, as well as facilitate genuine connection and spontaneous interaction. To overcome this role confusion, leaders should encourage crosstalk among members. For example, when members speak directly to the leader, the leader should instead ask the member to speak to the other group members. Another example is to actively ask for feedback and to model providing feedback. Online group leaders should be aware that they may employ similar skills as they might in a face-to-face group, however they must be more vocal and transparent about what they are doing in an online group in order to structure cross-talk and interactions between group members as these may happen less naturally in an online group.

Group leaders should work to enthusiastically link members with similar experiences and stories and address here-and-now moments within the group setting. Drawing members out and verbally reaching through the digital divide to encourage participation is a useful skill. Due to

the linear feel of the group process, leaders should be assertive in asking clients how they feel and their reactions to what is being shared, so as to engage members more completely. Finally, online group leaders are cautioned to not fall into a narrow skill set that encourages linear interactions. The online environment lends itself to a directive leadership style and an overuse of closed-ended questions. Overuse of these skills leads to members becoming stuck in the student role and leaders becoming teachers.

Part 4: Logistics

The final step in the training includes students meeting in their previously assigned groups and working out logistical issues. Students present with a wide variety of technological know-how and comfort levels, so having them work in groups to support one another in practicing with the assigned online environment is useful. Examples of videoconferencing environments that can be used include university learning management systems such as Blackboard or Canvas or supported videoconference software such as Zoom or GoToMeeting which are HIPAA compliant. Students may need to obtain log-on information and download software to computers. This process may take several hours, depending on the level of technological understanding. Instructors should be prepared to aid students should they become frustrated, as well as compel other students to support classmates that need additional assistance. Finally, a review of HIPAA regulations concerning distance counseling practices should be discussed.

The groups of students will find an agreeable time for all members to meet simultaneously for one hour outside of class time. Once days and times are agreed upon, students exchange contact information including cell phone numbers and email. Finally, the leadership schedule will be set up so that each member knows the week in which he or she is

leading the group. The leader is responsible for designing and implementing a group plan for the week they lead their online group.

Weekly Online Groups

After the training week, the groups will facilitate their online groups for the next several weeks. The number of weeks are determined by the number of participating group members. The members meet on the identified digital platform at the agreed upon time. There is one leader per week and each student leads one time during the online group process. This allows for the students to have the experience of being both a leader and a member of the online group, which mirrors accreditation standards (CACREP, 2015). Group leaders are required to develop a plan for the group in which they lead, and are expected to be creative in their use of online materials to engage group members (See Appendix B for example outline). Leaders are instructed to communicate their group plans to the instructor every week to allow for constructive feedback and instruction. Some topics that have been used in past groups include control issues, confidence, or other professional concerns. Groups meet in a videoconference format once a week for 50 minutes. At this point in the semester, students are aware of the nature of a process group and have a context for the expectation for participation and group development.

Since online groups are conducted outside of class time, in order to monitor participation in each group session, instructors may require group members to post to a private, graded, reflection after each session. An alternative to monitor student participation is to require a reflective survey asking members to rate their participation level, sense of belonging, group working alliance, or other constructs after each group. Students can also connect on a digital discussion board about their group experience or submit reflective journals. Depending on the

digital platform, videotaping may be possible for review by instructor and student. Grading may be implemented on group leadership skills depending on instructor decision.

Supervision

Supervision is ongoing throughout the course. In the face-to-face context of the course, students are required to submit brief reflection after the sessions in which they lead and all sessions are viewed by the instructor. Students can also be required to submit a reflection after the online group session in which they lead. Thus, all students are completing reflection assignments in both types of leadership opportunities. Instructors should be prepared to respond thoughtfully to these reflections in a timely manner in order to both support the students' development and expand further reflection. During weekly class meetings, the group leaders meet with the instructor to receive supervision and feedback regarding their leadership skills and development as a counselor. These meetings should also include the online group leaders in order to help them to reflect on and integrate their new learning as group counselors in different environments. Within the context of the feedback sessions, members of the groups should give feedback to the leaders regarding their leadership style, skills, and attempted interventions. Videotaping of the online groups may be possible depending on the capabilities of the digital platform. The instructor may wish to view these tapes with the student leaders for an additional layer of supervision.

Finally, the instructor will lead a class debriefing and reflection the last week of the semester. The discussion should center on comparing both the online and face-to-face leadership experiences. Examples of discussion questions include: 1) What surprised them throughout this experience? 2) What were the differences between the two modalities? 3) What were the difficulties of each? 4) How did they personally progress as leader? 5) How does one type of

leadership inform the other? 6) What are the differences in the stages of group development, specifically safety and trust? 7) What did they notice about the curative factors of group in each environment? This debriefing allows for thorough discussion of the experience and cements the student learning process. Students are able to hear the experiences of the other members and become aware of a variety of perspectives.

Discussion

The provision of online counseling continues to increase (Richards & Vigano, 2013). As such, the training of counselors regarding online counseling delivery methods, skills, therapeutic interventions, ethical concerns, and efficacy information should also expand. Cartreine et al. (2012) state that given the overall consumer acceptance of online counseling, new practitioners should be trained in service provision. As discussed, intentional training of online counseling skills is becoming increasingly imperative (Anthony, 2015; Cartreine et al., 2010; Kit et al., 2014; Mallen et al., 2005). Given the guidelines set forth by relevant accrediting and ethical bodies (e.g., ACA, CACREP, ASGW), the individual credentialing post-licensure option is not sufficient.

Experiential learning is the cornerstone of counselor training, particularly when it comes to group counseling (CACREP, 2015). The goal of this course design is to familiarize and train students in online group counseling within the context of an on-campus course. This course design allows for the development of both face-to-face and online clinical skills and provides the opportunity for supervised practice and feedback. In the current design, students receive intentional training on the background and context of online counseling, skill-based interventions, and supervision regarding their experiential practice of leadership. Ohrt, Ener, Porter, and Young (2014) found that experiential group participation was crucial to counselor trainee learning. This type of experiential participation in an online format provides conduit for

students to learn first-hand about online counseling process and practice. Counselor educators can use this course outline as a general guide should they desire to include online training within group counseling courses.

The suggested format would also be amendable to group counseling courses taught in a distance or hybrid format. The infrastructure of the course context would lend itself well to the inclusion of videoconferencing groups that students are both leaders and members of throughout the semester. Even if the students travel to campus for face-to-face intensive group work, an online, videoconferencing experience would enhance the overall semester engagement and supplement learning.

Students with disabilities represent a great number of higher education students, both in on-campus and distance learning programs (Stewart, Choi, & Mallery, 2010). Assistive Technology has created myriad ways in which students with disabilities have more consistent access to educational opportunities (Black, 2004). However, instructors should not overlook the need to be intentional and thoughtful when including new technology requirements in their classrooms (Black, 2004). Instructors should be knowledgeable about the various types of disabilities (e.g., visual, cognitive, physical, or auditory) and work with students and disability offices ahead of the course to ensure equal accessibility for all students. For example, the chat-based function in a videoconference session may be used in a formal capacity or students may use specialty software, such as dictation or text-to-speech, during the group (Klemes, Epstein, Zuker, Grinberg, & Ilovitch, 2006).

These considerations are particularly important as one of the touted benefits of online counseling is that services can reach traditionally underserved clientele (e.g., people with disabilities, people who are geographically isolated; Skinner & Latchford, 2006). Counseling

students may benefit from accessibility conversations related to online counseling in order to prepare them for consistent service delivery including accommodations for clients with disabilities.

Future Directions

Further understanding of the ways in which we develop the knowledge and skill of online service provision in for counselors-in-training must be better understood. One suggestion for future research is the focus on how basic counseling skills can be delivered more effectively in an online environment (Trepal et al., 2007). Information regarding the types of skills that are effective in creating positive client outcomes should be gleaned so that it can be implemented in training programs. Additionally, future research should focus on the efficacy of training programs for counselors-in-training regarding online counseling skills as the way in which students learn online counseling skills is currently not well understood (Cartreine et al., 2010). Finally, counselor educators would greatly benefit from implementation suggestions for coursework and training, especially those that are based on data and learning outcomes. The more information that the field of counselor education can obtain regarding best practices for educating counselors-in-training, the more explicitly the profession will be able to work legitimately in the new, digital landscape of counseling.

Conclusion

The call for counseling training programs to begin integrating online counseling knowledge and skills is clearly described (Anthony, 2015; Kit et al., 2014). Kit et al., (2014) state, “group counselor educators have to consider the most effective training methods for teaching novice group counselors... in both face-to-face and online group counseling” (p. 317). Master’s-level counseling training programs provide the foundation of life-long counselor development. It is crucial that counselor educators become aware of and engaged in the future direction of the field and work to

incorporate training procedures and experiential opportunities that will benefit students and future clients alike.

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Appendix A
Suggested Syllabus Schedule (based on 14 weeks of class meetings)

Week of Semester	In Class Activity	Out of Class Activity
1	Go over syllabus and expectations	
2	Lecture and discussion – group stages, leadership skills, therapeutic factors	
3	Face-to-Face group 1 and supervision of leaders	
4	Face-to-Face group 2 and supervision of leaders	
5	Face-to-Face group 3 and supervision of leaders	
6	Face-to-Face group 4 and supervision of leaders	
7	Face-to-Face group 5 and supervision of leaders	
8	Online group training	Online group 1 – leader reflection due
9	Face-to-Face group 6 and supervision of leaders	Online group 2 – leader reflection due
10	Face-to-Face group 7 and supervision of leaders	Online group 3 – leader reflection due
11	Face-to-Face group 8 and supervision of leaders	Online group 4 – leader reflection due
12	Face-to-Face group 9 and supervision of leaders	Online group 5 – leader reflection due
13	Face-to-Face group 10 and supervision of leaders	Online group 6 – leader reflection due
14	Final discussion of Online group experience	

Appendix B Sample Group Plan Outline

Purpose:

What is the focus/topic/ reason for the group? What are you hoping to explore with the group members?

Opener (5-10 minutes):

How will you get the group warmed up? This can be a round, an exercise or a short activity that should allow *all members* to check-in with the group and begin to engage in the group process.

Main Activity (30-40 minutes, including processing):

What is your main group work activity?

Processing Questions:

How will you process your activity or topic with the group? What will you ask? How will you engage the group after the main activity?

Closing (5-10 minutes):

How will you close the group? What do you hope the group takes away from this week? A round or check-in where everyone speaks/reflections is usually appropriate here.

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Recruiting Undergraduate Students: Creating a Path to the Counseling Profession

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Counselor educators must find ways to encourage undergraduate students to choose to pursue a graduate degree in counseling. Related helping professions (e.g., psychology, social work) may have a recruitment advantage. Faculty in disciplines with both undergraduate and graduate programs can encourage high achieving undergraduate students to continue into graduate programs within their discipline. Due to the lack of a discipline specific academic pathway and an undergraduate advising system directing students into counseling graduate programs, counselor educators must find innovative ways to recruit undergraduate students. The authors will discuss the issues involved in recruiting undergraduate students, present a framework for sharing information about the counseling profession, and provide strategies for recruiting undergraduate students into counseling graduate programs.

Keywords: Counselor Education, Recruitment, Undergraduate Students

Recruiting students into counseling programs is challenging due to the lack of a standardized undergraduate path to professional counseling. While other graduate professions typically recruit undergraduates from within their own discipline, counseling graduate programs must recruit students from a wide variety of related majors (e.g., psychology, education, communication, international studies, multicultural studies, etc.). Beyond anecdotal evidence collected by counselor educators, it is unclear how undergraduate students are informed about the counseling profession and why applicants make the decision to apply to counseling graduate programs (Nagpal & Ritchie, 2002). Upon examining the counseling literature, there was an absence of research related to recruitment of undergraduate students into counseling programs. Furthermore, there was sparse research on recruitment strategies from related professions. The authors reviewed research from related professionals (e.g., psychology, nursing, social sciences) and extrapolated those strategies for use within counselor education. The purpose of this

manuscript is to discuss the challenges and opportunities for recruiting undergraduate students into counseling programs.

Recruitment of undergraduate students depends upon the awareness of the counseling profession as a graduate program option and the congruence with their personal skills and interests. St. John (2000) stated that “no college decision is more thought-provoking, gut wrenching and rest-of-your life oriented-or disoriented-than the choice of a major” (p. 22). The variety of jobs, credentials and specializations in the helping professions increases the confusion for undergraduate students to choose a graduate program (Norcross, Sayette, Mayne, Karg, & Turkson, 1998). There are a variety of factors that influence undergraduate students’ selection of a college major. Beggs, Ross, and Knapp (2006) reported that sources of information, job characteristics, interest in subject, and characteristics of the major influenced undergraduate student’s choice of major. In addition, pressure from parents, recommendations of friends and relatives, recommendations of counselors, genuine interest in the subject, university catalogs and brochures, popular media, financial aspects, occupational prestige, perceived quality of life, type of work, aptitude for subject, match between personality and subject, genuine interest in the field, faculty/program reputation, exposure to introductory course in the major, course variety, ease of earning a degree, class size, accessible faculty, wide variety of class sections, faculty mentor system, faculty activity with campus recruitment, past job experiences, job outlook/security, social benefit, and web assessments impacts choosing a major (Beggs et al., 2006). Undergraduate students often seek advice from other students, professors and academic advisors, departmental websites, and informational events within academic departments (Galotti et al., 2006). Introductory courses in a student’s major are also factors that influence a student’s decision to select and remain in a major field of study (Malgwi, Howe, & Burnaby, 2005).

Keillor, Bush, and Bush (1995) suggested that programs can increase the number of students in their major by improving the mentor relationship between faculty and students. Furthermore, academic programs with faculty who actively recruit students and maintain positive relationships with professionals increase the number of students in their programs (Keillor et al., 1995). While many undergraduate students struggle to make decisions about their educational and personal goals, few utilize the resources available through career services (Fouad et al., 2006). Garver, Spralls, and Divine (2008) found less than 50% of college juniors use career services, and college seniors utilize career services less frequently than juniors.

Decisions made regarding academic major significantly impacts an individual after graduation. However, many undergraduate students are more focused on developmental and immediate issues such as relationships, autonomy, creating a self-identity, dealing with peer pressure, cultural milestones and money (Andersen & Vadehey, 2012; Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye, 2016; Galantas Von Steen, 2000). Many undergraduates do not possess a realistic conceptualization of their future career (i.e., salary, job), lack a clear understanding of the career path, and consequently may need to adjust their expectations to the realities of the job market (Sukiennik & Raufman, 2016). Undergraduate students may have difficulty conceptualizing long-term consequences of major selection on their career opportunities (Brown, 2015). Undergraduate students should weigh the perceived benefits (i.e., learning experience, social capital, expected higher earnings and lower unemployment) with the costs (i.e., increased debt, less free time, stress) when making the decision on whether to enroll in graduate school (Perna, 2004). Unfortunately, there is little data to support how undergraduate students make these decisions and the factors that leads them to enroll in the graduate counseling program. At the same time that undergraduate students are struggling to find a career path, reduced state funds for

higher education has increased pressure on program faculty to increase and maintain enrollment in graduate programs. Participation in program recruitment activities is no longer just a responsibility of the graduate school or department chairperson. Woodhouse (2006) found that most of the university faculty surveyed listed recruitment as part of their responsibilities, and emphasized the importance of faculty involvement in recruitment. They found that graduate program coordinators and department chairs were most involved in the recruitment process.

Recruitment Strategies

Bishop (2010) reported that recruitment is one of the most important activities for institutions of higher education. While there are numerous individual strategies for program recruitment, Harold and Ployhart (2008) hypothesized that there were four primary attributes important to recruiting prospective psychology graduate students: fit, funding, prestige, and location. At the beginning of the application process, fit was the most important to prospective psychology students, followed closely by funding and prestige, then program location. The importance of program fit and funding opportunities increased when the graduate program communicated acceptance offers to the students. This suggests that recruitment strategies also need to change as the applicants move through the application process. Students who are offered admission to counseling programs do not always accept and enroll in coursework. Counselor educators must be aware of interventions that emphasize how the prospective counseling student fits with the counseling program and how they can pay the cost of graduate school.

Graduate program recruitment strategies include personal contact with students and participation in graduate program recruitment/career fairs. Wehner, Giardini, and Kabst (2012) emphasized the importance of personal contact with prospective students. They found that undergraduate students made their decisions based on “critical contact elements,” (p. 602).

Critical contact elements included the first contact with an applicant by a counseling program representative, the applicants' perception of the appeal of the physical building or counseling program office, and the programs efficiency at processing applications. Effective recruitment strategies involve building relationships with prospective students through personal interactions. Capomacchia and Garner (2004) identified the use of professional fairs, workshops, and campus visits as common ways to connect with potential applicants. In addition, building relationships with students' family members can provide additional encouragement for a student to consider a graduate program. Counselor educators can speak with supportive mentors such as the undergraduate students' faculty advisor to communicate the programs interest in their student and how the counseling program could be a good fit for their undergraduate student. Interpersonal relationships between students within graduate programs are important. Grapin, Lee, and Dounia (2015) encouraged faculty to communicate how the program has opportunities for students to develop friendships with other students. Providing the option to participate in a cohort and creating structured learning communities that offer ongoing support for nontraditional students increases the interpersonal connection. Students experience greater academic success when they experience supportive relationships with other students and faculty (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006).

In graduate pharmacy training programs, Breland et al. (2013) emphasized the importance of communicating opportunities for students to be involved in research, participate in honors courses, and personal connections with faculty. Graduate assistantships that provide tuition waivers and stipends were strong motivators for prospective pharmacy students to select a graduate program. In another healthcare profession, Abdallah, Dowling, Findeisen, Knight, and Melillo (2013), addressed recruiting strategies for nursing programs. They proposed holding

workshops and discussions in middle and high schools to introduce students to nursing as a career choice, and then following up with the high school students that expressed interest. Similarly, Perna et al. (2008) emphasized the importance of college counseling at the high school level particularly for underrepresented students. School counselors were encouraged to utilize all available resources and collaborate with universities to emphasize a college going culture. Counselor educators could build a mutually collaborative relationship with local school counselors and provide information about the pathway to become a professional counselor. Counselor educators could participate in high school career fairs, meet with individual students, and share the career path that led them to becoming a counselor. Although there is not an immediate recruitment return on the time invested with k-12 students, cultivating an understanding about the job of a counselor through career fairs, providing classroom guidance lessons on relevant personal/social topics (i.e., suicide prevention, bullying, healthy relationships) and explaining how counseling can reduce distress can count as important professional advocacy service activities. It is possible that increased understanding of the counseling profession would lead some of the high school students to want to become a counselor and eventually apply to a graduate counseling program.

While results specific to counseling profession was not provided, the general occupation of ‘Therapist’ was listed as a female-dominate profession as women represented 80% of the total employed in the workforce (Department of Labor, 2014). The Department of Labor (2014) classified any occupation in which one gender represents 75% or more of the employed work force as being a gender-dominated profession. Specific recruitment strategies are needed to encourage underrepresented populations to enroll in counseling programs (i.e., non-traditional older students, minority students, male students). Examining the demographics of the student

population enrolled in specific academic programs to determine the students who are underrepresented is critical in determining program specific recruitment goals (Michel, Hall, Hays, & Runyan, 2013). Michel et al. (2013) recommended creating a taskforce within the academic program to develop additional strategies to recruit underrepresented students. At one time, women were an underrepresented population within counseling programs. In an attempt to identify recruitment strategies of women into counselor education, Anderson and Rawlins (1985) suggested not only creating networking opportunities for women, but also encouraging counselor educators to serve on campus wide committees that involved screening, recruitment, and outreach to female students who could be recruited into counseling programs. The involvement of counseling faculty in campus activities where there is a preponderance of males and underrepresented undergraduate students might create opportunities to have conversations about counseling graduate programs. There are similarities in the need for targeted recruitment strategies from 30 years ago to today. Michel et al. (2013) found that isolation and lack of a voice were two factors commonly reported by male students in counseling programs. Sharing success stories of male students in program brochures and on websites were reported helpful in recruiting efforts. Michel et al. (2013) provided a list of successful recruitment strategies endorsed by counseling faculty members which included informing men about availability of jobs in the field, advising undergraduate male students about counseling careers, actively involving faculty in recruitment and retention of males, and changing the gender-based perception males may have about choosing counseling as a career path.

Underrepresented students often need financial aid to fund graduate school. Counselor educators can provide clarity to the process regarding how students can pay for graduate school through scholarships, opportunities for graduate assistantships and financial aid. Prospective

students may be uncomfortable discussing their own ability to pay for graduate school and consequently may be unaware of the various funding opportunities. Informing non-traditional students – particularly those who have been out of school for years - about financial options (e.g., graduate assistantships) within a department may be particularly helpful. Communicating the funding opportunities available can potentially influence underrepresented students to feel more connected to a program (Capomacchia & Garner, 2004).

Poock (2007) provided the results of a survey of graduate admission professionals on specific activities used to recruit underrepresented students. Common strategies to attract and retain underrepresented graduate students included the graduate institution providing funding opportunities (i.e., assistantships, scholarships, grants), developing website, hosting graduate program visitation days. Other more creative, but less utilized strategies reported were brochures that marketed the graduate program to a specific population, creating an undergraduate to graduate bridge program, creating an online virtual open house, and working with the office of minority students. By far, assistantship and funding opportunities were reported to be the most effective means to recruit underrepresented graduate students. Quarterman (2008) reported that barriers to program recruitment included a lack of structured recruitment events, lack of financial support, and lack of access of eligible pool of students to recruit. Overall, recruitment strategies will be more successful if counselor educators communicate how a counseling program is a "good fit" through the process of recruiting, accepting, and then enrolling students in coursework.

Identify a Fit with the Counseling Program

The perceived fit with a graduate program was found to be the most important factor for attracting students during the enrollment process (Harold & Ployhart, 2008). In order to

understand how to help students match themselves with helping professions, it is important for the undergraduate student to examine how his/her strengths and interests are matched for a particular career field. This can be accomplished through participation in career assessments and further discussions with career counselors to determine the types of career fields and graduate school options that may be likely to be a good fit. Often individuals choose the field of counseling because they were interested in working with people, regularly provided advice and support to friends or family, and/or may have received support from a helping profession in the past (Hazler & Kottler, 2005). Counselor educators can provide information regarding how an undergraduate students' perception of counseling compares with the realities of working as a professional counselor.

Anderson and Rawlins (1985) found that academic mentors support students as they make educational transitions from undergraduate to graduate school. The advocacy and support of an undergraduate academic mentor can assist with the selection of major. Academic mentors can share unwritten information about fields, help to access professional opportunities, and teach about political structures within departments increasing the ability to fit with a program (Anderson & Rawlins, 1985). It is important for counselor educators to build relationships with academic mentors in undergraduate programs who may encourage undergraduate students to pursue graduate study in counseling. In addition to faculty mentors, parents and family members may influence whether a student views themselves fitting within an academic program.

Because the psychological and emotional needs of students may be becoming a higher priority for families, it is increasingly likely that families will base their enrollment decisions, at least in part, on some sense of where a student would be "well-cared for."
(Bishop, 2008, p. 3)

Bishop (2008) found that satisfaction of parents with the academic program was one of the major factors in whether a student will select an undergraduate program. The amount of influence that parents have on selection of a graduate program is unknown. With the reality of helicopter parents involved in the academic / social decisions of students at college (Lum, 2006), it is likely that those parents will have input regarding choice of a graduate program.

Maton et al. (2011) reported that graduate students from underrepresented populations may also experience barriers finding a fit with graduate programs. To identify opportunities that may lead to success, Levin, Jaeger, and Haley (2013) found that minority students' sense of harmony with a particular graduate program impacted their selection of and satisfaction with the program. Costello (2005) defined these concepts as the degree to which a students' personal identity is congruent with the identity of a graduate program (i.e., students' perception of faculty attitudes toward minority students). According to Costello (2005), the greater incongruence between personal identity and the values of faculty, the less successful the student may fit with the graduate program. Levin et al. (2013) found that the concept of identity congruence also applies to the career choices and quality of experiences of minority students. If a minority student believes their career choice was not supported by the program faculty, then they may feel disconnected and less likely perceive they fit.

The incongruence between personal and program identity can be particularly challenging for Muslim students. Tummala-Narra and Claudius (2013) found that many graduate students in the United States who are Muslim reported feelings of isolation, religious misunderstanding, cultural disconnect, and discrimination. Social support is a factor impacting the acculturation of ethnically diverse students, and discrimination by the university community is a major barrier for cultural adjustment. Counselor educators can take action against this bias by incorporating

multicultural information throughout the program to promote a greater understanding and a create a program characterized by support to fit the needs of underrepresented students.

Compare Counseling to Other Helping Professions

Comparing personal interests and abilities to the characteristics of professions can be useful in determining a career that would a good fit for an undergraduate student (Holland, 1997; Sukiennik & Raufman, 2016). Providing undergraduate students with information about the counseling profession and how it compares to other helping professions is helpful to make an informed decision. However, when conducting a basic online search for general information about helping professions (i.e., counseling, social work, psychology), there is little clarity on the differences between helping professions. There are few online resources available for undergraduate students to learn the difference among helping professions.

Students applying to helping professional graduate programs are often encouraged to select programs that match their academic credentials, research interests, career trajectories, financial needs, and theoretical orientations (Norcross et al., 1998). Since the counseling profession does not have a recognized undergraduate degree program, counselor educators must be intentional in communicating significant information about counseling programs. Investigating the job tasks, knowledge, skills, abilities, work activities, values, salary, and projected growth within the helping professions are important for decision making. Since many characteristics of the helping professions overlap, undergraduate students could be encouraged to prepare a comparison table of helping professions. Table 1 provides information from the Occupational Information Network (O*Net, 2017).

Table 1: Comparing counseling and related professions

<i>Field</i>	<i>Education (Minimum)</i>	<i>Projected growth 2014-2024</i>	<i>Sample of reported job titles</i>
Counselor - Guidance, School, & Vocational	Master's degree	5%-8%	School Counselor, Career Counselor
Counselor – Mental Health	Master's degree	14% or higher	Counselor, Therapist, Clinician
Marriage & Family Therapists	Master's degree	14% or higher	Family Therapist, Counselor, Psychotherapist
Psychologist - Counseling / Clinical	Doctoral degree	14% or higher	Psychologist, Counselor, Psychotherapist
Psychologist - School	Master's degree	14% or higher	School Psychologist
Social Worker - Child, Family, & School	Bachelor's Degree	5%-8%	Social Worker, Case Manager
Social Worker - Mental Health and Substance Abuse	Master's degree	14% or higher	Clinical Social Worker, Counselor, Clinical Therapist,

Furthermore, it is important to help undergraduate students understand the characteristics of the various counseling specialty areas: Addiction Counseling; Career Counseling; Clinical Mental Health Counseling; Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling; College Counseling & Student Affairs; Marriage, Couple, & Family Counseling; and School Counseling as indicated by the 2016 Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Program Standards (CACREP). Undergraduate students could interview individuals working in the counseling specialty area, contact graduate counseling programs and professional associations (e.g., American Counseling Association), and/or review other information available online (e.g., U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics) to determine education requirements, job tasks, work setting, employment outlook, and salary. It can be particularly beneficial for undergraduate students interested in counseling to complete a volunteer experience to explore different work environments in order to determine which profession is a good fit (Brown, 2015; Cuseo, Thompson, Campagna, & Fecas, 2016). Undergraduate college or major-specific advisors have

a critical role in encouraging and directing students towards internship opportunities in the community. Counseling program faculty can build relationships with undergraduate advisors in related undergraduate programs (i.e., psychology, education, etc.), provide information regarding their graduate program and connect them with professional counseling alumni in the community who are willing to accept students who would like a shadowing experience. Real world experiences can help undergraduate students understand the counseling profession.

Increase Counseling Program Prestige

Once an undergraduate student recognizes he or she wants to pursue graduate study in counseling, then the prestige of individual graduate programs may be a factor in a student choosing to apply to a graduate program. There are a variety of sources (e.g., U.S. News & World Report, www.topcounselingschools.com, www.bestcounselingdegrees.net) that rank counseling programs each year. While the specific details regarding how each source determines program rank can be debated, counseling program faculty must recognize that this information is available to undergraduate students and may influence their perception of counseling programs. For the programs included in the list, the increase exposure may lead to increased opportunities to recruit undergraduate students. However, most counseling programs are not listed and it is outside of the control of the counseling faculty to be included in a formal list of top programs. There are other ways for counseling faculty to increase counseling program prestige.

Counseling faculty can apply for counseling program awards from professional associations (e.g., Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) Outstanding Counselor Education Program Award), serve in visible public roles (e.g., president of state or national associations), produce scholarship in publications likely to be utilized by undergraduate students, and advocate for high quality training facilities and resources for graduate students.

Improving the perception of program prestige could also include promoting the accomplishments of counselor educators and counseling program students across campus, within the community (e.g., in local newspapers), and throughout the counseling profession to highlight the quality of the counseling program. Counseling programs located within more prestigious universities (e.g., public perception of the overall quality of the educational and campus cultural experience of the university) may have advantages in recruiting applicants to counseling program. However, counselor educators at any university could intentionally build the positive public reputation for their program by promoting the outstanding accomplishments of their faculty and students within their university and surrounding community. One opportunity for program promotion in the community includes establishing a connection with a journalist from the local newspaper that is assigned to report on university issues. Counseling faculty can regularly send ideas for stories and offer to arrange for interview and pictures featuring outstanding students and faculty.

Address Student Financial Concerns

In addition to program fit and prestige, personal finances are a critical factor impacting whether an undergraduate student can afford to attend a graduate program (Cuseo et al., 2016; Doughty, 2009). While typical sources to finance graduate education include student loans, scholarships, grants, veterans benefits and personal salary (Cuseo et al., 2016), counselor educators can improve funding opportunities for their programs by working with alumni to develop new scholarships and advocating with their graduate school to develop new graduate assistantships. Counseling program faculty can work with their university foundation / development office to cultivate relationships with counseling alumni who have or are likely to provide donations to the university. There are frequent events in which counseling program faculty could speak to potential donors and discuss the importance of the counseling program

and the ways that funding could enhance a program. There may be opportunities for counseling program faculty to establish partnerships with local agencies, schools, and colleges who are willing to fund a counseling program graduate assistant. This type of arrangement may include the graduate assistant working for 20 hours per week from the beginning of the program through completion of their internship. Additionally, it is important to advertise existing financial aid opportunities available within counseling programs, and to also communicate the variety of scholarships available through counseling professional associations. For example, the National Board for Certified Counselors Foundation offers a number of scholarships for master's students (e.g., military, rural, minority, career), the American Counseling Association Foundation offers scholarships within their graduate student essay competition, and American School Counselor Association offers scholarships and graduate assistantships associated with their conference.

Counseling programs located in public universities have a recruitment advantage because tuition is typically lower than private and for-profit institutions. However, undergraduate students may perceive master's programs in counseling to be financially disadvantageous when comparing the publicized financial aid opportunities and perceived prestige of doctoral psychology programs. Many counseling programs have assistantship opportunities available for undergraduate students accepted into counseling master's programs, graduate assistant funding opportunities are not clearly communicated. Unlike guides available for psychology doctoral programs such as the *Insider's Guide to Graduate Programs in Clinical and Counseling Psychology* (Norcross & Sayette, 2016), the funding opportunities for master's program in counseling are not included in the comprehensive guide of counselor preparation programs, such as *Counselor Preparation: Programs, Faculty, & Trends* (Schweiger, Henderson, McCaskill, Clawson, & Collins, 2011). Undergraduate students seeking a graduate degree in counseling

must rely on receiving information regarding funding opportunities if available on the counseling program websites or through discussions with faculty or counseling program support staff.

Involve Stakeholders in Recruitment Efforts

Counseling program stakeholders (i.e., alumni, current students, university personnel, etc.) are important allies in communicating how the counseling program may be a good fit, clarifying information about counseling profession as it relates to other helping professions, developing funding opportunities for the counseling program, and reflecting the quality of the counseling program. Counselor educators can engage stakeholders through intentional action at the individual, university, and community levels.

At the individual level, stakeholders can be provided recruitment materials to utilize with students at the university, co-workers, friends and/or family members. While current counseling program students are an easily accessible population, counselor educators can connect with alumni by hosting continuing education workshops and sending regular program updates (e.g., program newsletter). Alumni can be invited to share how the counseling program was a good fit, and enabled them to reach their career goals. Alumni who are successful in the community or across the country serve as evidence of a counseling programs prestige. Counselors who work in local agencies or schools may also serve as part time instructors within the program. These individuals are also stakeholders who can be provided with recruitment materials and encouraged to recommend the counseling program to undergraduate staff at their agency. Part-time instructors can be invited participate in university graduate program information sessions, career fairs, and university committees. This creates opportunities for interaction between part-time faculty and undergraduate students. The perspective of a practicing counselor can be particularly impactful for an undergraduate student considering graduate program options.

At the university level, increasing stakeholder awareness of the counseling graduate program is important. Deans and other administrators frequently make decisions that impact funding opportunities (e.g., graduate assistantships assigned to a counseling program), and budgetary allocations that support department resources (e.g., technology, library resources, facility improvements, onsite counseling clinic, funding for student travel, etc.). Counselor educators should work with administrators at the university level to advocate for resources. The counseling program could develop undergraduate elective counseling based general education or first year experience courses (e.g., career and life planning course, mental health and wellness course) to create opportunities for undergraduate students to increase awareness of the counseling profession. Once undergraduate counseling courses are developed, those courses could then be combined into an undergraduate minor in counseling. This pre-counseling undergraduate degree could help prepare students with a clear pathway into the graduate program. Beyond their own department, counselor educators could build relationships with faculty across their university, and then request to deliver short presentations about the opportunity for graduate study in counseling. These presentations could be provided to students in undergraduate courses of students (i.e., psychology, social work, human development).

In addition to collaboration with university faculty, it is important to connect with undergraduate academic advisors and the university career services staff to increase their awareness and understanding since they are directly influencing the decisions of undergraduate students interested in graduate study. The increased knowledge about the counseling profession by career staff and academic advisors may facilitate referrals of undergraduate students to the counseling program. The counseling program can also benefit from the positive work of organizations such as Chi Sigma Iota (CSI), the counseling international honor society. When

CSI members are involved in campus wide events, their activities promote the counseling profession through positive interactions with undergraduate students. CSI student members should be encouraged to partner with undergraduate student organizations such as Psi Chi, the international honor society in psychology, and SEA, the Student Educational Association, on community service projects. These activities create valuable connections between graduate counseling students and undergraduates in psychology and/or teacher education. Finally, counselor educators can investigate opportunities to collaborate with undergraduate departments and develop six-year programs where students progress directly from the undergraduate to graduate major. While only a few bachelors to master's program agreed upon pathways exist at universities (e.g., bachelors in behavioral science to masters in counseling in six years), more programs could likely be developed by counselor educators.

At the community level, counseling faculty have opportunities to increase awareness of the counseling profession to potential stakeholders outside the university (e.g., community members, parents, faculty from other universities). Connections with undergraduate faculty and academic advisors at other universities (e.g., sending mailing, inviting individuals to informational sessions) can provide opportunities for those individuals to communicate how the counseling program could be a good fit to their undergraduate students. Community level recruitment strategies such as advertising the counseling program through the local newspaper can be accomplished without cost by promoting a program accomplishment (e.g., local counseling student wins an award). Counseling program websites can serve as a way to connect with undergraduate students by including information about the characteristics of undergraduate students that may lead to a good fit with the counseling program, funding opportunities within the counseling program, and information highlighting the prestige of the counseling program

(e.g., awards, resources, faculty publications, etc.). In addition to a counseling program website focused on undergraduate students, counselor educators should also look for creative ways to utilize social media (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram) to connect with undergraduate students. For example, a counseling department located at a Midwestern university maintains a Facebook page that includes regular weekly posts. The regular Facebook updates include pictures of events, recognition of national and local celebrations (i.e., national school counselor week), acknowledgement of student and faculty accomplishments (i.e., presentations, publications, awards), and news about alumni in the community. While most of the individuals who subscribe to the Facebook page are current and former students, some of the more popular posts are shared to a wider audience of family and friends.

Conclusion

Counselor education is a vibrant profession that requires individuals to be recruited from a variety of undergraduate majors. It is important for undergraduate students to have an awareness of the counseling profession (i.e., their university has a counseling master's program), and understand the unique characteristics of the profession as distinct from other helping disciplines. Although, there is a lack of research on ways to help undergraduate students find their paths to the counseling profession and recruitment strategies. Counseling program faculty can utilize strategies found in other related professions to help create a pathway to recruit students. Strategies include helping undergraduate students identify how they may fit with the counseling profession, by comparing characteristics of the helping professions, improving the prestige by promoting their own counseling program, providing opportunities for funding, and involving stakeholders in program recruitment. Additional research is needed to expand the understanding of the most efficient strategies to recruit undergraduate students. Further

qualitative research that includes as identifying undergraduate students' perception of counseling and related professions would be beneficial. It would be particularly helpful to understand how current counseling students discovered the field and what factors influenced their choice to enroll in a counseling graduate program. This could lead to action strategies to assist counseling faculty in determining the most effective ways to recruit undergraduate students. Increased intentionality to inform and recruit a diverse group of undergraduate students into the profession of counseling is necessary to serve the needs of our community in the future.

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Personal Counseling in Academic Programs with Counselor Trainees

Meredith Drew, Mark D. Stauffer, William Barkley

Counseling programs are responsible for harm caused by their counselor trainees. This study examined the effect of participating in personal counseling on basic clinical skills using the Counseling Self-Estimate Inventory. This article discusses this study's inconclusive results and implications for the development of counselors and counseling programs.

Keywords: counselor trainees, academic programs, clinical skills, counseling, impairment

Counselor education programs and programs in closely related fields such as psychology and social work, develop mental health clinicians to serve in the field. Part of the academic requirements for counselor trainees is a field experience that provides supervision as trainees engage in counseling with their clients. For many counselor trainees, this may be their first experience with counseling. Therefore, full competency of practicing counselors and psychotherapists who have not personally participated in counseling has been questioned. A general sentiment and legacy of the field is that a counselor participates in the same growth related, mental health, and wellness efforts in their own mental health process before working with others (Daw & Joseph, 2007). Counselors need a relationship similar to the process of counseling and psychotherapy as a client before leading such processes as a professional helper (Skovholt & Jennings, 2005). Due to such rationales, many counselor education programs require students to participate in personal counseling for a specific amount of therapeutic hours in an individual or group format (Homrich, 2009). This study examined one aspect of counselor development: the relationship between personal counseling and basic clinical skills.

Personal Counseling and Mastery

Jennings and Skovholt (1999) suggested that each of the following skills are essential to becoming a master therapist: microskills, counseling process skills, ability to deal with difficult

client behaviors, cultural competence, and an awareness of values. Master therapists have been defined as being self-aware, reflective, non-defensive, and open to feedback (Jennings & Skovholt, 1999). Several researchers have shown the positive relationship between counselor self-awareness and ability to effectively meet the needs of clients (Duthiers, 2005; Ellenwood & Snyders, 2006; Farber, 2000; Smith & Moss, 2009; von Haenish, 2011). Microskills (empathy, attending behaviors, reflection of feeling, questioning, summarizing) are taught in counseling programs as a means to establish a therapeutic alliance, cultural competence through trainings (Jennings & Skovholt, 1999; Sullivan, Skovholt, & Jennings, 2005), self-awareness through exercises (Jennings et al., 2005), counseling process, as well as dealing with difficult clients through modeling and role play (Murphy, 2005; Rake & Paley, 2009). Most of Jennings and Skovholt's list may also be encouraged through personal counseling.

When Strozier and Stacey (2001) surveyed students and faculty from a master's in social work (MSW) program, subjective reports suggested that personal counseling and therapy results in learning important to mastery of counseling. Students shared their responses to the usefulness of therapy specifically noting that therapy provided support to their own thought process and their own issues were not brought into their practice setting because they dealt with their issues in their personal therapy (Strozier & Stacey, 2001).

Likewise, Neukrig and Williams (1993) surveyed 739 counselors regarding their involvement in personal counseling. The benefits of personal counseling that the counselors discussed were an increase in the emotional health of the counselor, a decrease in therapeutic blind spots, an increased respect for the role of the client, an increase in the counselor's personal conviction about the ability of therapy to work, and a deepened understanding of the intra and interpersonal functioning and an increased self-awareness (Neukrig & Williams, 1993).

Although personal counseling has been endorsed (Hill, 2005; Kirsch, 2005; Laireiter & Willutzki, 2005; Lebow, 2005; Leech, 2007) and supports the personal and professional development of counselors, few counselors use personal counseling (Gold, 2010; Rake & Paley, 2009; Unkauf, 2010). Therefore the engagement in personal counseling needs to be examined.

Personal Counseling for Impaired Students

Li, Lampe, Trusty, and Lin (2009) and CACREP (2009) discussed the importance of and need for programs to create a system for dealing with impaired students. Programs need a proactive element relative to working with impaired students or determining the need for students to enter into other more appropriate programs (Li et al., 2009). Wilkerson (2006) found that many programs are not prepared to address impaired students, which can lead to issues for the program and for the field of counseling. Graduate programs continue to struggle with monitoring impaired students, even though they are mandated to be gatekeepers in the field of counseling and are required to address such issues (Rust, Raskin, & Hill, 2013). Program administrators have found that the rate of impairment is low, but the potential risk to clients and the graduate program are great; therefore, impaired students need to be addressed (Lin, Trusty, Nichter, Serres, & Lin, 2007).

Researchers have focused on counselor trainee development through personal counseling by identifying potential stressors counselors face when entering the counseling profession (Gaubatz & Vera, 2006; McCarthy, 2008; McCarthy, Pfohl, & Bruno, 2009; Rizg & Target, 2008; Smith, Robinson, & Young, 2007; Wester, Trepal, & Myers, 2009). When impairment is caused as a result of counseling practice, counselor trainees are often able to mitigate the negative effects of processing traumatic and upsetting client events through peer supervision (Dutton & Rubinstein, 1995), through professional supervision (Fernando & Hulse-Killacky,

2005), and other supports (Gold & Hilsenroth, 2009). However, sometimes these supports are not enough and so personal counseling may be helpful.

Counselor education programs may prescribe personal counseling to remediate student impairment, dysfunction, or acute personal crises when it is observed affecting academic performance or professional behavior. When counseling programs address impairment, personal counseling is often a central component to the remediation plan with which the counselor trainee must comply to remain enrolled in the program (McAdams & Foster, 2007). Counselor educators may be concerned that trainees are more vulnerable and need professional help to overcome their own struggles (McCarthy, 2008); will enter the professional field without addressing their long-term significant impairments and will harm their clients as a result (Lawson & Myers, 2011). Programs may also require personal counseling to help students resolve such issues on their own, as faculty may miss signs of the impairment in the academic setting and, therefore, the impairment is unaddressed (Gaubatz & Vera, 2006). Programs may have personal counseling as an overall addition to the academic program requirements (Homrich, 2009). Counselor education programs may also be using remediation with required personal counseling to mitigate the impact a student who may not be fit for the profession (Henderson & Dufrene, 2011).

This study examined the relationship that counselor trainees have to personal counseling and if there was an impact on the participation in personal counseling. There were two research questions: What is the impact of participating in personal counseling on perceived basic clinical skills as measured by the COSE overall total skills score? What is the impact of participating in personal counseling and type of skill on level of skill as measured by COSE?

Method

In this quantitative, quasi-experimental posttest study, a group to group comparison of counselor trainees who had or had not participated in personal counseling and scores on the COSE, which measures the following counselor basic clinical skills: microskills, counseling process, dealing with difficult client behaviors, cultural competence, and awareness of values. IRB approval was received and this study followed ACA Code of Ethics (2014) requirements.

Procedure

The initial invitation to participate in the study via e-mail provided the specific criterion required of participants and was sent to two hundred and sixty five program directors/designee of the CACREP Master's academic programs, obtained through the CACREP website. Program directors were then asked to forward this information to the students in their academic program, requesting eligible students to respond to the survey request. At completion of data collection, forty seven academic programs participated in the study. There were three follow up emails sent using the suggested method of Dillman et al. (2010). There were 1,100 participants eligible for this study, as provided by program directors; 252 participants were ineligible due to inclusion criteria, resulting in 848 eligible participants. In order to establish the sample size, ANCOVA: interaction, simple, and main effects, effect size of .25, alpha level .05, power .80, with numerator df of 1, groups 2, and covariates 2. Based on this calculation, the required sample size was 128. After completion of the survey and analysis, the final sample size was 128 participants, resulting in a 15.3% adjusted response rate. Participants were given a link that allowed them to enter the survey. After review of the implied consent, participants entered the survey verifying consent and completed the survey: demographic and COSE.

Participants

For the purposes of this study, CACREP (Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs) programs were selected due to the training and universal academic requirements specific to this study. Participants included 128 master's level counseling students from CACREP programs across the United States. Participants were selected to participate based on enrollment in a CACREP program and currently completing their internship course requirement (48.4% ($n = 33$) were in Internship I and 74.2% ($n = 95$) were in Internship II). Participants ranged in age from 22 to 60 years ($M = 30.41$). The sample included 108 (84.4%) women and 20 (15.6%) men. The sample was limited in ethnical diversity: 4.7% ($n = 6$) were Hispanic, 81.3% ($n = 104$) were Non-Hispanic white, 2.3% ($n = 3$) were Asian American, 7.8% ($n = 10$) were African Americans, and 3.9% ($n = 9$) described themselves as other or did not respond. There were 48.4% ($n = 62$) participants who participated in personal counseling and 51.6% ($n = 66$) participants who had not participated in personal counseling. Participants who had mental-health work experience comprised 25% ($n = 32$) of the sample, while 75% ($n = 96$) of the participants had no mental-health work experience. Participants varied in the counseling program that they were enrolled in: 0.8% ($n = 1$) were in addictions counseling, 51.6% ($n = 66$) were in clinical mental health counseling, 8.6% ($n = 11$) were in marriage, couple, and family counseling, 35.9% ($n = 46$) were in school counseling, and 3.1% ($n = 4$) were in student affairs and college counseling.

Measures

Participants completed a demographics survey and the Counseling Self-Estimate Inventory-COSE (Larson et al., 1992). The demographics survey sought information regarding

each participant's gender, age, ethnicity, graduate program, academic level, experience working as a mental health professional and whether they had participated in personal counseling. Specifically, participants were asked if they have participated in *personal counseling** during their graduate program (*this is defined as participated in personal counseling directly (50-60 minutes per session) as a client with a mental health professional, for the purpose of exploring and/or experiencing the dynamics associated with individual counseling for a minimum of eight sessions). If participants responded with yes, a follow up question was asked asking for the number of sessions that they attended for personal counseling. Participants were asked the nature of personal counseling (i.e. voluntary, required, recommended by academic program, or other) and if they selected no regarding personal counseling, then they were asked to select the reason that they have not attended (i.e. no reason to, no interest in participating, uncomfortable with process, past negative experience, financial constraints, time constraints, or other). Finally, participants were asked about past personal counseling experience as a client attending more than 8 sessions of 50-60 minutes or longer within a 12-month time period (this includes individual, couples, family, or group counseling, but does not include academic or career counseling). A follow-up question was asked if the participant indicated yes, obtaining information on the amount of times participant entered personal counseling for either 3-8 sessions or at least 8 sessions.

The COSE is generally used to indicate the counselor trainees confidence in their counseling skills to work with a client. An estimate of internal consistency (Larson et al., 1992) was computed for each of the five skills or variables that the COSE measures microskills (12 items), counseling process (10 items), dealing with difficult client behaviors (seven items), cultural competence (four items), and awareness of values (four items). COSE uses a 6-point

likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (6) strongly agree to respond to the statement (e.g. *I feel that the content of my interpretation and confrontation responses will be consistent with and not discrepant from what the client is saying; I feel confident that I have resolved conflicts in my personal life so that they will not interfere with my counseling abilities*).

Larson et al. (1992) created both positively and negatively worded items to prevent the influence of response set bias and indicated that items are internally consistent $\alpha = .93$ and stable over time. In order to score the COSE, the responses are combined to provide a score for each of the five areas, then these are combined to provide a total score. Each factor of the COSE was internally consistent: microskills $\alpha = .88$, counseling process $\alpha = .87$, ability to deal with difficult client behavior $\alpha = .80$, cultural competence $\alpha = .78$, and awareness of values $\alpha = .62$. The instrument is positively related to counselor performance, self-concept, problem-solving appraisal, and performance expectations. The COSE is sensitive to change over the course of master's practicum students and across different levels of counselors, indicated by a 3-week test-retest reliability of $r = .87$. Each factor of the COSE also has test-retest reliability: microskills $r = .68$, counseling process $r = .74$, ability to deal with difficult client behavior $r = .80$, cultural competence $r = .71$, and awareness of values $r = .83$ (Larson et al., 1992). The COSE yielded an alpha coefficient of .94 on a study of differences of counselor trainees and self-efficacy in online programs and traditional programs (Watson, 2012).

Results

The purpose of this study was to examine and compare the effects of perceived basic clinical skills on counselor trainees who attend personal counseling while obtaining their

master's degree in the field of counseling and those who do not attend personal counseling while obtaining their master's degree. Specifically, the two questions asked were:

1. What is the impact of participating in personal counseling on perceived basic clinical skills as measured by the COSE overall total skills score?
2. What is the impact of participating in personal counseling and type of skill on level of skill as measured by COSE?

To explore what the impact of participating in personal counseling on perceived basic clinical skills as measured by the COSE overall total skills score, a one-way ANCOVA was used to test the differences in means between the two groups for total score after controlling for covariates (previous personal counseling and mental-health-work-experience) and simple effect of type of skill within each group. There was no statistically significant difference between those who participated in personal counseling and those who had not participated in personal counseling $F(1, 124) = 1.040, p = .310$. The total score on the group was not statistically significant without the covariates, $F(1, 126) = .502, p = .480$ (see Table 1).

Table 1

ANOVA Summary on Total Score on COSE without Covariates

Source	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Between Groups	.165	1	.165	.502	.480
Within Groups	41.322	126	.328		
Total	41.487	127			

Among counselor trainees enrolled in a CACREP academic program and currently completing their Internship I or Internship II experience/course, ($N = 128$), there were no statistically significant difference between those who participated in personal counseling ($n = 62$,

$M = 4.77$) and those who had not participated in personal counseling ($n = 66$, $M = 4.88$). Therefore, we failed to reject the null hypothesis that there is no difference between participating in personal counseling and not participating in personal counseling on total perceived basic clinical skills.

This study was designed to determine if personal counseling was related to perceived basic clinical skills. Of the 62 participants who indicated participation in personal counseling, 8.6% participants marked *required*. The remaining 51 participants indicated *recommended by academic program*, *voluntary*, or *other*, allowing for specific response.

While the results showed that participation in personal counseling did not have an impact on perceived basic clinical skills, results may not reflect the ways personal counseling can be important to individual professional growth. As a testament to this finding, one participant commented on the "positive effect of counseling leading to professional knowledge and greater personal insight." The results may also not reflect the ways personal counseling may be important to other clinical skills not measured by the COSE. (See Table 2 for comparison of mean scores before and after adjustment of covariates).

Table 2

Mean Scores for Groups Before and After Adjustment for Covariates

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>Adjusted Means</i>
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Group: With Counseling

Microskills	4.99	4.99
Counseling Process	4.53	4.53
Behavior	4.55	4.55
Cultural Competence	5.02	5.02
Awareness of Values	5.03	5.03

Group: Without Counseling

Microskills	4.97	4.98
Counseling Process	4.80	4.80
Behavior	4.60	4.60
Cultural Competence	5.05	5.05
Awareness of Values	4.96	4.99

Note. Each variable list is the basic clinical skills measured by the COSE (Larson et al., 1992). The group referred to as yes, participated in personal counseling and the group referred to as no, had not participated in personal counseling. Behavior = dealing with difficult client behaviors.

Discussion

Response of Participants

The results in this study differ from the literature on this topic. Two possible reasons for the difference between the literature and these results could be the following: (a) unreliable self-estimates of basic skills levels and (b) participation in academic work, namely supervision and internship involvement, caused maturation across the sample (when supervisors cause growth prior to personal counseling).

Self-estimate reliability

As Bandura (1977, 1992) discussed, self-rating may be higher by the participants who had not participated in personal counseling and may not accurately depict their basic clinical skill level. A possible reason for the lack of significant difference in the results of this initial outcome was that participants assess their own skills on the COSE. The self-estimate would then be only as good as the quality of supervision and ability to incorporate the feedback that they have

received to date, primarily from their supervisors. Counselor trainees may not be aware of the positive or negative behaviors that they are engaging in as they work with their clients if the supervisor does not address these concerns with the counselor trainee. This may be the result of counselor trainees with a lack of supervisory feedback interpreting the lack of criticism as positive and then rating their own skills as higher than they are.

Many participants indicated that they did not have pressing issues (reasons they felt required personal counseling to address); therefore, they did not participate in counseling. A counselor trainee may view personal counseling as only a tool for when issues emerge instead of as self-growth (Yager & Tovar-Blank, 2007).

Although faculty in counseling programs may recommend or require personal counseling for student development, personal counseling did not have a statistically significant relationship to total skills on the COSE (Larson et al., 1992), indicating that there is no difference in perceived basic clinical skills between those who did and did not participate in personal counseling. Program directors and faculty may wonder if programs should require or recommend personal counseling for skill development and gatekeeping purposes (Henderson & Dufrene, 2011). Academic training programs must balance the academic rigors and requirements while also ensuring that skill demonstration is evident (Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010). This commitment showcases the value of the counseling profession for not only clients, but for professionals delivering the counseling services (Roach & Young, 2008). Few programs require personal counseling for counselor trainees (Homrich, 2009), while most programs recommend participation in personal counseling for personal growth (Yager & Tovar-Blank, 2007). Additionally, if academic programs send students to personal counseling for the purpose of skill

development only, they may not see an improvement in their students' skill level, based on the inconclusive results discussed in this study.

Basic Clinical Skills

Although those who participated in personal counseling had a higher mean score for microskills, there was no statistically significant difference between the groups (see Table 2). The combination of academic courses and supervision (on-site and off-site) may have provided counselor trainees with adequate guidance and modeling of these skills. Because the covariate for previous microskills training was not used, it is difficult to determine if this affects the relationship between microskills and personal counseling.

Counseling process, as measured by the COSE (Larson et al., 1992), assessed content that is difficult to define and clarify. The result is inconclusive. It may be possible that those who had not actually witnessed counseling process may rate their basic clinical skill level higher than they actually are. Further research is needed.

As there was no statistically significant difference in the COSE subscale dealing with difficult client behaviors. Personal counseling may not help clients deal with difficult client behaviors. Therefore, the type of client each student may be could affect the experience they have in personal counseling and indirectly, their basic clinical skills. The counselor trainees would unlikely observe modeling of working with difficult clients in their own personal counseling, unless possibly in a group therapy format. Braer and Dorrian (2010) suggested that only a small percent of counselor trainees (14.1-14.4%) were not fit because of difficult behaviors. Without the direct experience of working with a difficult client or acting as a difficult client, counselor trainees may assess themselves incorrectly in this area.

COSE scores for cultural competence were almost equal between the two groups of counselor trainees. Personal counseling may not have an effect on cultural competence. However, there may be other reasons why the scores were equal. First, cultural competence is an area that academic training programs address throughout multiple courses and may be emphasized in the internship sites. Second, participants evaluated their skill level in relationship to their current clients. If they felt competent with these clients, then their perception of skill level would be high, regardless of cultural identity. Furthermore, counselor trainees may assess their ability higher if they have a similar cultural identity to their clients or supervisors.

Participants who engaged in personal counseling had a higher mean in the COSE total score than those who did not, yet the results were not statistically significant. While the inability and unwillingness to be self-aware was identified as being an indicator of unsuitability in counselor trainees by counselor educators (Braer & Dorrian, 2010), it was often identified prior to counselor trainee's internship experience. The counselor trainees who participated in this study were assumed to have adequate levels of self-awareness and the participation in personal counseling may not have added to their basic skill level. The means found in this study (within each subscale) were higher than the means that were reported in Kozina et al. (2010) and Yuen et al. (2004) for all skills in both groups. Kozina et al. had a small sample size and compared first-year counselor trainees at two times during the first year development of skills. Yuen et al. had a large sample size, but focused on Western culture that may interpret some of the scale statements differently, resulting in the difference of means.

Limitations

Since the results were showed no difference, areas for further exploration are discussed. Personal counseling helps with (a) professional needs directly (Hanna, 2002; Smith & Moss,

2009; von Haenisch, 2011), (b) personal needs that indirectly help professional needs (Murphy, 2005; Strozier & Stacey, 2001; von Haenisch, 2011), (c) professional needs that indirectly help personal needs (Norcross et al., 2009; von Haenisch, 2011), and (d) personal needs directly (Murphy, 2005; Norcross et al., 2009; von Haenisch, 2011). Additionally, it may be beneficial for academic programs to do their own research on the effect of personal counseling on their students. This may reduce self-selection bias. According to Fogg (2009), recommendations can be made without counselor trainees feeling overwhelmed by another requirement and time constraint. Licensing and certification bodies could accept personal counseling as valid continuing education hours, therefore providing a financial and time cost savings to counselor trainees. The participation in personal counseling hours could be applied to all or simply a portion of the continuing education hours. Accepting personal counseling participation as continuing education hours can further promote the counseling profession, demonstrating that they are consumers of the services that they provide while adhering to regulations by ACA Code of Ethics regarding continuing education and competency (ACA, 2014). Further studies and literature need to address these benefits more closely. The use of personal counseling may focus on personal concerns of the counselor trainee, not skill development.

Implications for Counselor Educators

Academic programs should follow a more standardized approach about the use of personal counseling to maintain consistency in the field. Few academic programs require involvement in personal counseling, many programs may verbally recommend it, and other academic programs only present personal counseling as an option if an issue occurs or it becomes part of a remediation plan (McAdams & Foster, 2007). Because academic programs have varying requirements for personal counseling, if any, an accepted number of counseling

sessions would unite programs. Specifying a specific number of sessions at points throughout the academic program to ensure that all levels of counselor development are addressed may be more beneficial. While concerns of confidentiality may be present, the content of the sessions would remain confidential and follow the same format as traditional counseling. Program administrators may consider an attendance sheet to verify personal counseling for the counselor trainee.

When counseling is required, academic programs may want to include personal counseling into the tuition costs and set up contracts with local counseling providers to increase accommodations to various schedules, financial considerations, connection to personal counselors, travel considerations, and empowerment in selecting a personal counselor. Financial stress was indicated by participants as a reason they did not participate in personal counseling. One participant in the study commented that they were unable to access the college or university counseling center to obtain an appointment and the negative interaction resulted in the participant ceasing the pursuit of personal counseling. Daw and Joseph (2007) found that negative interactions with the counseling staff was common and negatively affects the view of counseling. The same experience could be applied to clients, who may feel similar and avoid personal counseling as a resource. If there were greater accessibility to personal counseling services, there may be a higher likelihood that personal counseling would be used by the counseling profession. The results of these goals may include counselors who are more effective at treating others, less likely to damage clients, more prepared when their own personal issues arise as a result of their professional work (they would already have the connection to supportive services), and may prevent levels of burnout, compassion fatigue, and/or vicarious trauma (Warren, Morgan, Morris, & Morris, 2010).

Rizg & Target (2008) identified positive results from engaging in personal counseling, such as relationship-building can lead to more detailed emotional stories, endorsing the experience, and supporting it as a requirement. The goal of the counseling session for each student was left open to be confidentially determined by the psychologist and student, which further emphasized the personal elements of counseling (Rizg & Target, 2008). Each student was able to address their own needs without a predetermined agenda. For academic programs, personal counseling provides another layer to the development of counselor trainees and emphasizes the importance of gatekeeping in the professional field. Other professionals have also discovered the potential benefits in related studies.

Conclusion

Personal counseling has been a decision that most counselor trainees are able to independently make regarding their own participation. Generally, those who do not participate in personal counseling cite that there are "no reasons to" participate. This lack of understanding of the value that counseling may provide to an individual can be seen as a narrow focus and ignores the opportunity for self-reflection, understanding, growth, and further development as a professional counselor. As the counseling profession continues to gain momentum, it is essential to continue to evaluate the results of personal counseling for counseling professionals.

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